

STAR TREK III: MORE ALIENS, MORE ACTION, MORE SEX!

Rod Serling's
THE TWILIGHT ZONE
Magazine

AUGUST 1984

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PLUS: 7 TALES OF HORROR & SUSPENSE



Rod Serling's THE TWILIGHT ZONE Magazine

FICTION

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Cover photo of Cathie Shriiff from *Star Trek III* © 1984 Paramount Pictures Corporation



The Great Cartoon Mystery

You can have your Bermuda Triangle, your UFOs, and your poltergeists. Bigfoot, move over! Nessie, go home! Me, I've got mysteries of my own. Two of them, to be exact, and they have me baffled. The first is a movie mystery: how in the world did a dreary mess like *Greystoke* get rave reviews from so many influential critics? And I'm not just talking about publicity-seeking blurb-mongers like *Newsweek's* Jack ("The *Shining* is the 2001 of horror movies") Kroll; I'm talking about nearly every reputable critic this side of Pauline Kael. Did they all see the same movie I did?

Mystery number two: how did *Twilight Zone* and *The New Yorker* manage to come out with virtually identical cartoons during the very same week? Our version, featured last issue, is the work of "Feggo"—short for FELIPE GALINDO GOMEZ, a young Mexican cartoonist now living in Manhattan; we bought a batch of his work last summer. *The New Yorker's* version, purchased last spring and printed in their April 2 issue, is by Anthony Taber, a magazine regular who lives upstate.

Now, there's nothing unusual about two cartoonists coming up with the same gag; as Anne Hall of *The New Yorker's* cartoon department assured me, "That happens all the time. Remember, we get a couple of thousand submissions every week." What's amazing is the similarity of conception, right down to the man's posture, the ripples in the water, and the fact that, in an earlier draft, the Taber cartoon featured giraffes just like Feggo's. (We'd have liked to reproduce Taber's drawing side by side with Feggo's, but a rather stuffy lawyer at *The New Yorker* said, in effect, nothing doing.) Even more amazing is the uncanny coincidence of timing. In fact, for that small but elite group of discriminating readers who subscribe to both *The New Yorker* and *Twilight Zone*, the two Noah's-Ark-bearing issues arrived in the very same day's mail!

Kind of boggles the old mind, doesn't it?

Something else we now share

with *The New Yorker* (along with second-class mailing privileges) is an uncommonly gifted writer named STEVEN MILLHAUSER. No one has ever approached me on the street and asked me to name the two best novels ever written about childhood, but in the hope that sooner or later someone will, I have an answer ready: not *Tom Sawyer* or *Huck Finn*, but Booth Tarkington's *Penrod* (in the complete 1931 edition) and Millhauser's *Edwin Mullhouse*, a wonderful book, utterly *sui generis*, which Knopf published back in 1972. Critics hailed it as "astounding and delightful ... enormously funny and moving ... a thoroughly original, brilliant first novel ... one of the finest novels I have been privileged to read in recent years ... such intelligence, wit and compassion that a reviewer's catalogue of superlatives is inadequate to it." Indeed, the book's depiction of a middle-class American childhood is so stunningly (and hilariously) perceptive that one imagines Millhauser must have gone through his own early years, from infancy onward, with a tape recorder in his pocket and a video camera strapped to his head. *Edwin Mullhouse* is worth hunting through libraries and second-hand bookshops for; so is his second novel, *Portrait of a Romantic*, a memorable look at adolescent obsessions. His *Cathay* in this issue, first published in the quarterly *Grand Street*, is an imaginative work that may remind you of Kafka and Calvino, or even Poe or Peake, but the beauties of its language are all Millhauser's.

Those who are thoroughgoing Poe aficionados ("And who isn't?" cliché fans are supposed to chime in) will be pleased to hear, in T.M. SWAIN's *Shuffling Blues*, echoes of one of the master's cleverest and least-known tales, "The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether." Like Swain's story, it's set in a rather unusual insane asylum.

From madhouse to haunted house—nay, two haunted houses: *The Night Listener* and *All Fall Down*. CHET WILLIAMSON, author of the former, has been published in

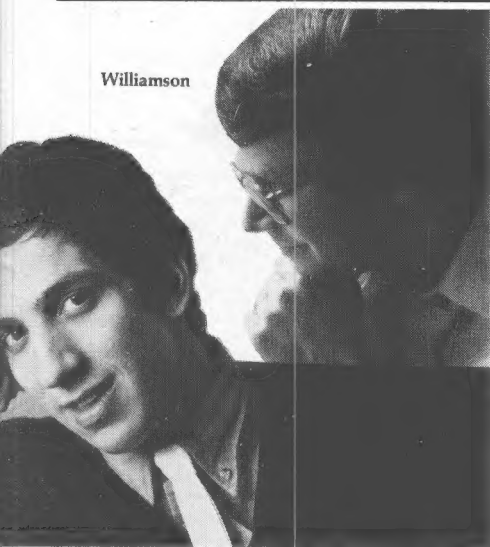


Playboy, *Games*, and, yes, *The New Yorker* (with the scandalous "Gandhi at the Bat"), but he made his professional debut back in October of 1981 with the *Twilight Zone* cover story "Offices" and has appeared here a number of times since, both as a storyteller and a quizmaster. (In this he's now joined by AL SARRANTONIO, author of two previous TZ stories and this issue's *Spider-Zone Puzzle*.) DON TRAVERSO, author of *All Fall Down*, is a more mysterious sort; all our team of trained private detectives was able to get out of him (aside from an occasional cryptic phone call) was that he's a Chicagoan, types with two, sometimes three fingers, and is into punk, avant-garde, and heavy

Our version



Williamson

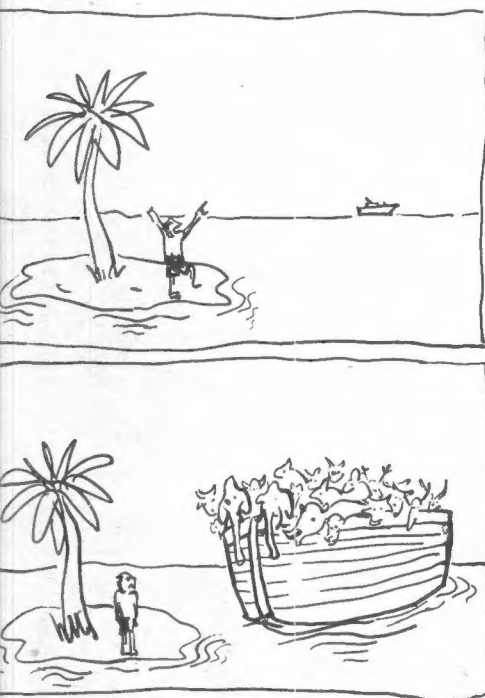


metal music. Here the report ends in a barrage of noise.

Mysterious things happen to illustrations for magazines rather like this one in our issue's lead story, *Ten Thousand Pictures, One Word* by NANCY KRESS. Those who crave even more bizarre goings-on should read her recent novel *The Prince of Morning Bells*, an imaginary-world fantasy from Pocket Books.

Not a Bad Job is something rare: it inspires a sense of awe and wonder using the most humdrum of everyday props and a spare, almost cynical style. It marks the fiction-writing debut of RICHARD PARTLOW, a librarian and audio-visual manager in the Los Angeles Public Library. He notes: "My wife teaches art at Los

Artist's rendition of New Yorker version



Angeles Community College and UCLA. Our three children (triplets: a boy and two girls) have just entered college. Our two dogs and two cats have decided to stick around."

Artwork for the story was provided by HARRY PINCUS, an old *Twilight Zone* hand (first recommended to us by TOM DISCH) and a regular at Greenwich Village art shows, where he's usually surrounded by hordes of women. His work has appeared in the *Times*, the *Daily News*, the *New Republic*, and the Franklin Library's edition of the *Spoon River Anthology* (available only by subscription, alas); one of his etchings won a recent award from the National Academy of Design. In the picture on page 61, incidentally, the man with the beatific smile is Harry's father.

Another TZ contributor, PETER KUPER, has begun to appear with increasing frequency in the *Times* and *Times Book Review*. Peter turns out, at short notice, the hippest of underground comics, satiric cartoons, scary woodcuts, and pen-and-inks that look like scary woodcuts. His linoleum cuts in this issue are taken from Dodd, Mead's *The Last Cat Book*, based on an ailurophilic essay (originally titled "The Beast from the Abyss") by—of all people—Conan's own ROBERT E. HOWARD.

OUR COVER: Why, you ask, has a tradition-minded, somewhat prim magazine like *Twilight Zone* devoted its cover to a busty Klingon spy from the latest *Star Trek* movie?

Well, kids, it's time you learned the truth: it has not exactly been lost upon our publisher that the bestselling issue of *Sports Illustrated* is traditionally its annual bathing suit issue, and that *Life* has just chosen to, so to speak, follow suit. We at *Twilight Zone* decided, therefore, that it was high time we tested the old adage, Sex Sells. And who knows, it may actually be true (though personally I have a feeling that if any magazine's going to disprove that adage, it's *Twilight Zone*). We couldn't quite figure out how we could get away with sticking a girl in swim trunks on our cover, and forty-seven other magazines, including *American Dentistry*, have already beaten us to the punch by featuring Daryl Hannah in her mermaid gear; but then this attractive alien happened along, and ... well, we realized it was fate.

—TK

Rod Serling's THE TWILIGHT ZONE Magazine

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Books

by Thomas M. Disch

Illustration © 1983 Thomas M. Disch



I have a peculiar attitude toward comic books. At least I think it's peculiar, but I've never discussed it, and so it may be as common as the cold. My attitude is that I'd like to be able to enjoy them but find I am unable to.

As a kid I was crazy for comics. I knew just what day of the month Dick Tracy would hit the stands. I envied the freewheeling freedom of my friend Bruce, whose parents allowed him to get E.C. Comics, whose glorious excesses were the inspiration for the censures of Dr. Wertham, the Savanarola of the seventh grade. I collected comics by the crateful, and then, coming of age, I realized that they *were* trash, just as grown-ups had said all along, and (fool that I was) I threw them out. Later I went through similar crises of renunciation with mysteries, sf, and pop music, but in those cases I eventually came round to what I like to think of as a mature and balanced appreciation, savoring the best, making do with the next-best, and ignoring (except for review purposes) the great mass of the mediocre and

Top: A panel from Osamu Tezuka's "Phoenix," from *Manga! Manga!*

Right: Harvey Pekar's *American Splendor*, illustrated by Robert Crumb.

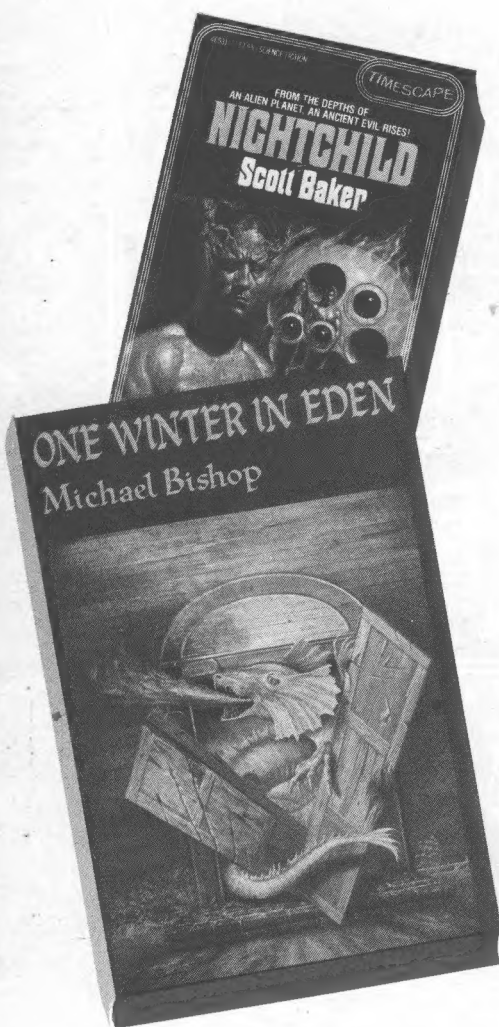


NOW I KNOW I MUST SEE THE BIRD WITH MY OWN EYES.... I'LL TRAVEL TO THE LAND OF THE TANG AND FIND HER IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO !!

WHAT REALLY MADE ME MAD WAS THAT WHILE ALL THIS STUFF WAS GOING ON, THE VOICE TOOK ON ANOTHER FULL-TIME CARTOONIST AND HIS WORK REALLY SUCKED! IT WAS REAL COY AND PRECIOUS. HE SEEMED LIKE A TWELVE-YEAR-OLD TRYING TO SHOW HOW SENSITIVE HE WAS. LOOK, I DON'T WANNA SOUND VINDICTIVE, NOT COMPLETELY VINDICTIVE ANYWAY (HEH HEH)... THE VOICE'S OTHER CARTOONISTS ARE FINE. JULES FEIFFER IS VERY IMPORTANT—HE SHOULD LIVE AND PROSPER... STAN MACK'S O.K.... MORE POWER TO 'IM, BUT THIS GUY....



Books



the god-awful. But I could never get into such a provisionally accepting frame of mind toward comics. That sector of my innocence seemed irretrievable.

Then I thought I'd found a way to recapture that lost ground by a flank attack. Kodashi International has brought out a beautifully produced, lavishly illustrated history of Japanese comics, *Manga! Manga!*, by Frederick E. Schodt (\$19.95). Comics—*manga* to the Japanese—are even more popular there than here. According to comic artist Osamu Tezuka's foreword: "... foreigners living in Japan are ... amazed when they first discover how big the boom in Japanese comics has become. Daily they are surrounded by examples of the vitality of comics culture that would be unthinkable in their own countries. A Japanese businessman on his way to work sits on the train with his nose buried in a children's comic book. That same comic, in a

single week, might sell 2.5 million copies."

Thinking to enjoy in an exotic form what seemed merely simple-minded in its domestic varieties (as I'd once enjoyed samurai movies when westerns seemed old hat), I dutifully read through the four complete Japanese comics offered as a supplement to *Manga! Manga!*. My innocence remains lost, for all four struck me as being as feeble in conception and execution as their American counterparts. The culture that made high art of popular editions of woodblock prints has not, on the evidence of this sampling, brought off the same mass-culture miracle with comics. There are oddities that give many Japanese comics—and *Manga! Manga!* itself—a curiosity value for Western readers, such as the popularity among adolescent girls of *binashi* comics, which treat the gay romances of *binashi*, or "beautiful boys." But curiosity value is distinct from aesthetic value, as witness the "Rose of Versailles," a tale of intrigue set in the court of Louis XV, as sappy as any issue of *Teen Romance* and drawn in the manner of a "Draw Me" matchbook, but fascinating for its overlay of Japanese psychology on Western subject matter. The effect is like a No play based on the Watergate scandals: interestingly silly.

Just when I'd decided that comics really were infra dig, from off the streets of Cleveland comes *American Splendor* (\$2.75), a series of comics taking the unlikely form of an illustrated monologue by their author and publisher, Harvey Pekar. There are no superheroes in Pekar's comics and no teen romances, just a series of utterly plausible anecdotes about quotidian life, a car that breaks down in winter, and his failure to scrounge a free doughnut from a coworker—plus long rambling ruminations, as Pekar is seen wandering through a park, about how he's been feeling since his second divorce (an earlier issue of *American Splendor* was devoted to that single event) or (the main theme of this issue, #8) tales of full-frontal anxiety on behalf of his brainchild, *American Splendor*. All these "stories" have been illustrated by a number of established underground comic artists, such as Robert Crumb and Kevin Brown. The result has some of the simultaneously homespun-and-flakey charm of

Garrison Keillor's broadcasts about Lake Wobegon on *Prairie Home Companion*. (If you don't live near a store that deals in underground comics, you can probably get copies directly from Harvey Pekar himself, at Box 18471, Cleveland Heights, Ohio, 44118.)

Ever since America discovered Tolkien and disinterred the John Carter adventures of Edgar Rice Burroughs, there has been a considerable confusion of realms in the ever-less-distinct genres of science fiction and fantasy. Part of the confusion initially came from publishers who perceived no real difference between two forms of popcorn and proceeded to package both under the generic label of sf. Soon the writers were abetting these packaging decisions by producing sf adventures using the timeless templates of "heroic fantasy." For example, there is Robert Silverberg's three-decker valentine to fandom (recently concluded in *Valentine Pontifex*), which technically can lay claim to being labeled sf by virtue of being set on another planet rather than in Middle Earth. However, there is little in such work to recommend it to those readers (clearly not a majority, but still more than a happy few) who come to science fiction to test-drive possible futures rather than to daydream about telepathic dragons; readers, that is to say, hungry for the meatier sf of a Clarke, a Dick, a LeGuin, a Benford.

Even for such readers fantasy seems to be in the ascendant these days—if we can judge by the work of the newer writers who have chosen to cater to the upscale end (eighty-five percent lean beef or better) of the sf/fantasy scale. Consider *The Anubis Gates* (Ace, \$2.95) by Tim Powers, a spectacularly successful fantasy adventure and the winner of this year's Philip K. Dick Memorial Award for best original paperback in the field of sf. Powers manages to combine virtues rarely found in alloy form: a flair for grotesque invention, an intelligent grasp of history (needful if one's time-traveling hero spends most of the novel in 1810 and earlier), a knack for dramatic organization that allows him to achieve a denouement as neatly dazzling as a two-minute solution to a Rubik's Cube, and a prose style that is never less than vivid and can

reach, at need, the sublime—all this in the service of an adventure story as zippy and rambunctious as *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

The Anubis Gates is wonderful fun, and thoroughly deserves its award, though the competition this year included such first-rate rivals as M. John Harrison's *The Floating Gods* and Zoe Fairbairns's grimly effective feminist dystopia, *Benefits*. But I have to ask myself, despite all this, whether the novel is in any sense science fiction.

Why, you may ask, must I ask myself that? Who but pedants care what label is attached to a book, so long as it plays in Peoria? Ordinarily I would agree, but recently I read an editorial in a science fiction magazine written by Robert ("Glass House") Silverberg, in which the creator of Lord Valentine was lamenting the same observable phenomenon, the ascendancy of fantasy in work published as sf. Silverberg seemed to regard this as a symptom of the genre's weakening intellectual and moral fiber, and I confess that I share

an antipathy for novels that make much of dragons, unicorns, or even foundlings with psychic powers who are destined for royal majesty.

Is *The Anubis Gates*, then, besides being a splendid story, a symptom of decline? Its mix does include some traditional fantasy ingredients: an arch-villainous sorcerer who hangs out in the vicinity of the Great Pyramid; a werewolf; various magic potions and a thicker sort of glop in which a duplicate self can be grown (a *ka*, in the Egyptianizing lingo of the novel); a clown-faced Punch-and-Judy operator who is the secret master of London's beggars and keeps a banquet hall for them in an annex to the sewer. And, as the ads say, much more.

Even from that short catalog you must have gathered the impression that Powers's inventions, while they may be traditional, are scarcely standard-issue. Indeed, even in the matter of the sorcerer and the werewolf, Powers gives them such novel characteristics (the former gravitates toward the moon rather

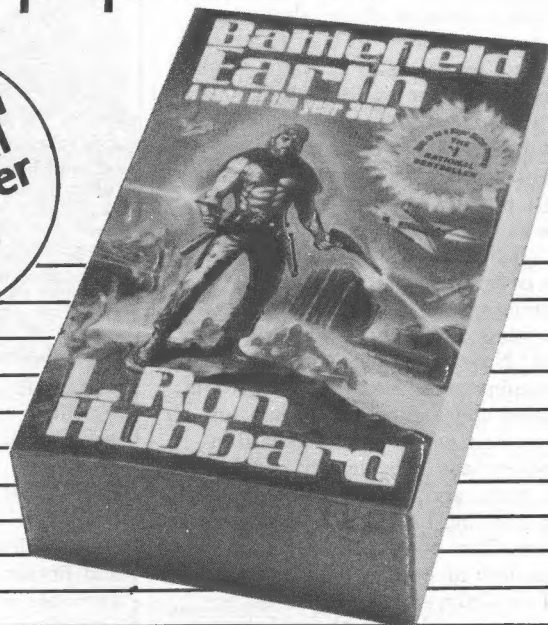
than terra firma; the latter is a danger only to himself, but he is multi-selved) that the sense throughout the book is of overbrimming inventiveness, never here-we-go-again. More than that, Powers integrates all his smaller inventions into a kind of non-Euclidean logic by which one grand impossibility, time travel, interacts in his five-dimensional plot with the independent impossibility of the *ka* to produce a truly elegant dramatic resolution in chapter the last; "elegant" in the sense that equations are said to be elegant. No, it's not sf, but in terms of *brío* and power in dramatic organization there are few sf writers presently at work who can give lessons to Tim Powers.

Nightchild by Scott Baker (Timescape, \$2.95) is a horse of almost the same color. Dramatically it is not as satisfying as *The Anubis Gates*, since it raises many more issues than its rushed and breathless denouement can resolve, but on the (continued on page 70)

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Publisher's Weekly

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Screen

by Gahan Wilson



It may be the spread of the super-duper megacorporations, whose advisors stand ready to apply their computations to any project or product from diapers or apples to the financial feasibility of a newly designed fast-food chain or a promising little war, but I have noticed that the scheduling of film releases has become distinctly more mechanical.

Of course, there always was a certain pattern in release dates. Christmas generally inspired a clutch of heart-warming shows designed to encourage families to stay together, increase in size, and continue buying things. Summer traditionally catered to a populace with lots of spare time. But by and large these orchestrated openings were fairly makeshift, and most pictures were released more or less as they were finished, willy-nilly.

Not now, though. Those days are over. Yessir, old-timey coin-flipping or the tossing of darts at calendars is strictly a thing of the past. Nowadays there's a computer humming away near the boardroom, stuffed chockablock with data on when and where this or that film category and subcategory should hit the deck, and at least three experts are standing by ready to analyze the figures that come out on folded paper with lots of little holes along its edges. Only when this process is complete, and more than likely run through once again just to be on the safe side, will Feature X be thrust upon the public.

How else to account for the



Above: "Giving vent to ogreish hoots, growls, and moans." Neville Brand goes on the warpath in *Legend of the Bayou*.

Right: "Humans are a passion with Max." The mechanical hero of *Android*, played by Don Oppen, fights for his life against his mad-scientist creator (Klaus Kinski), watched by his robot replacement, Cassandra (Kendra Kirchner).

strict periodicity with which fantasy and horror films are let loose? I am probably more aware of this than the general run of viewers because of my solemn responsibility to write this column so that it will regularly appear in the beloved pages of this venerable magazine. And before I can

write a single word, I have to have a film to rattle on about, because if I don't have one I am liable to drift off into ramblings about personal problems, the state of the economy, is there a God or what?, and things like that—all of which, edifying as they doubtless are, are not what you,

gentle reader, have a right to expect, even if you might be generous enough to tolerate it now and then.

That is why, when day after day I find the movie pages advertising endless features about slick, pretty thieves engaged in witty larcenies, or searching examinations of various feeling relationships amongst sensitive people, or thrillers about sadistic policemen terrifying innocent criminals, I tend to get just a little tiny bit paranoid, and my February Theory occurs to me once more.

For February is the month when they don't show our kind of films, you see (heh-heh). I don't know why, but it's always February. It may be that *They* think everybody's mind is on Presidents and other such highly respectable things, particularly during election years, and so wouldn't be interested in a simple ghoul or flying saucer. Someday I shall compile a list of what's been showing through all the Februaries in history so as to have something to write about come February.

But I won't have to do so this time (though it almost came to that), because at the last minute, following what I am starting to think of as the Early March Theory (heh-heh), *Legend of the Bayou* and *Android* turned up. So there probably is a God after all, and I thank Him.

Legend is, as the ads say, "From the Creators of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*." I believe I've said hereabouts before that I consider

Chainsaw to be my absolutely favorite drive-in classic (except I'd like to do just a tiny bit of adjusting to the last seven or eight minutes), and so I always get in line to see the latest thing Tobe Hooper's been up to with considerable hopefulness, in spite of *Poltergeist*, for which, it must be remembered, there were extenuating circumstances.

Legend is not up to *Chainsaw*, I am sorry to say, and the word is that Hooper himself disavows the film, having had no control over its final form; but it does have many glorious moments and over all possesses the same insane, buzzing quality which its noble predecessor had, so it's decidedly worth seeing if you're at all interested in Hooper's work, even in a less-than-perfect state. (Hooper is now in the process of filming Colin Wilson's *The Space Vampire*. The combination of Tobe Hooper and Colin Wilson seems a most unlikely one, but we shall see. They are both extremely fond of sadistic murderers, so it may work out, after all.)

Legend is a mad dither from its first frame to its last. There is no peace in it for a moment, and every character is frantic, each in his or her own special way, save for a cynical Tennessee Williams-style sheriff, played flawlessly by Stuart Whitman. Throughout the film Sheriff Whitman seems as undisturbed as a Zen warrior and views the bedlam spinning around him with a charming

and sleepy-eyed tolerance.

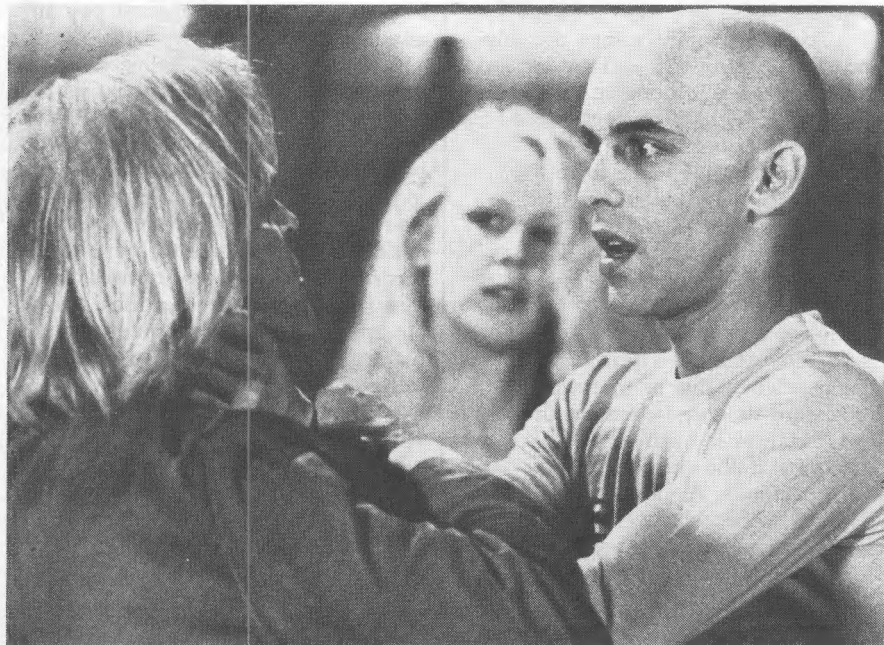
The movie starts off by following a little blond prostitute as she wanders off after being fired by the madam of the whorehouse for not submitting to sexual instructions from the town bully, and we see her make the very serious mistake of deciding to put up at the Starlight Hotel, an establishment ranking right up there with the Bates hostelry for rough treatment of its guests.

The Starlight is presided over by none other than Neville Brand, wearing a pair of glasses with the bridge and one lens missing. He also has a wooden leg; his real one, it seems, was eaten by a huge crocodile which he keeps in a walled-off area of the swamp in front of the hotel's porch. As he explains tirelessly to all comers in his roaring giant's voice, his scaly pet is not an alligator but better, and he has a relationship with it something along the lines of Ahab and Moby Dick.

Brand shares his simple bedroom with a department store dummy, keeps a gum-ball dispenser next to the hotel's registration book, indulges in jumpy, ineffectual fits of dusting and lamp-adjusting which entirely fail to give the place a tidy look, and, except when he's eavesdropping on lovers or sneaking up on victims, seems incapable of keeping silent. When he's not talking he's muttering, and when he's not muttering he's giving vent to ogreish hoots, growls, and moans. One of the best moments in the movie is Brand's attempt to lure a curly-haired toddler into his fiendish grasp by trying to coo gently at it. What he does to "Ooooh hoo! Ooooh hoo!" chills the bones—in a hilarious sort of way.

The soundtrack of *Legend* uses tricks very like those of *Chainsaw*, blending music, odd noises, the grunts of Brand, and the shrieks of his victims, not to mention really great rackets which stand proudly on their own, such as that made for hours on end by a determined lady trying to get untied from a brass bed with rusty springs and creating, in the process, a gloriously memorable din.

All those buzzings, clickings, and unexplained crashings add to the general looniness. The vaguely irritating presence of country music singing and plucking endlessly away in the back of your head, the mad bird and animal sounds oozing in



Screen

from the bayou, the embarrassing ruckus made by badly functioning toilets, all of these things and a heap besides, clattering and sloshing and burping around together, are what I imagine it must be like to be nutty as a fruit cake and liable, from sheer irritation at this ceaseless jangle, to strike out at anything or anyone available. If only all that goddamn noise would just shut up and give you a little peace, you might be able to stop killing people.

There are a lot of visual lunacies, too. The *Starlight*, when first seen, is bathed in a wash of garish flamingo red, the effect of, I assume, a sunset—but a sunset perceived with a maddeningly painful intensity (enough to drive you nuts!). The lobby looks like something out of a French sex farce, where scoundrels duck away from cuckolds, mistresses hide from wives, and everyone flounders in awful confusion. Hooper uses it just that way to tell his horror story: mad murderers grasping bloody scythes pop out unexpectedly from trick doors, a victim in one room starts at the sudden screams of a victim in another room, and great, sprawling splotches of blood are patiently mopped away to make room for even more sprawling splotches. The whole thing has the mad, complicated inventiveness of a comic opera, zipping along industriously from one absurd but colorful tableau to the next.

Hooper trots out the insatiable crocodile with great insouciance. He handles it like a running gag, a sort of whacky jack-in-the-box, ever more nervy, never sated; busting stairs and bannisters into kindling so that its next meals can notice the wreckage and worry about what force of nature could have made such a terrible mess. The beast frolics ecstatically (all this *food!*), having a wonderful time, bless its heart.

In sum: it may not be another *Chainsaw*, but until Hooper gets around to coming up with such a thing, no one else is likely to be able to pull it off. Meanwhile, *Legend* will have to do.

Android is another kind of picture altogether, but it, too, has a good sense of spoofery, if sometimes strained. The action takes place in an enormous spaceship housing the sinister laboratory of Klaus Kinski, who, with his slanting splash of a

smile (or could it be a grimace?) and his huge, staring eyes, makes for an extremely satisfactory sort of mad scientist.

Kinski is working on a very hush-hush R&D project concerning androids for a naughty corporation which has no compunctions about stretching the law, or even breaking it, if the potential profits look good enough. It is illegal to manufacture androids, you see, after what they did when they went out of control in Chicago! Kinski has on board one fully operational android named Max 404, played by Don Oppen (who was also involved in writing the script), and a new, improved, but not yet operational model with long wavy hair, played by Kendra Kirchner, who spends most of the movie lying corpselike, though prettily, on Kinski's operating table, and has trouble not moving her eyelids on tight close-ups. She does not come to life till late in the action.

The peaceful existence of this little trio is rudely interrupted when a passing ship requests permission to dock for repairs. Intercepting the message, Max is delighted to welcome the newcomers aboard, since the android will then have a chance to observe and study a whole new bunch of humans. Humans are a passion with Max; he is constantly consulting the material on them in the ship's computer, spending hours watching old Fritz Lang movies and educational films on sex, and taking tips from Jimmy Stewart on how to wear felt hats.

So Max happily admits the ship into the docking bay and escorts its crew into Kinski's domain. It is here that *Android* starts getting into a little trouble, because the crew members turn out to be three "terrorists"—a nice male terrorist, a bad male terrorist, and a vacillating female terrorist—and they aren't, as written and played, real people at all, but cardboard characters.

Now in a movie like *Legend* it really doesn't matter too much of a damn whether this or that victim is cardboard or not; indeed, in those circumstances it might even be a drawback if the character were not cardboard. A movie about a mass murderer who went about slaughtering characters you had come to believe in and care deeply for wouldn't really be all that much fun.

But *Android* is a movie that asks

us to think, if only on a modest scale, and the issue it raises may be a bit heavy for the film. We are supposed to compare humankind with pseudohumankind. Is the one better or worse than the other? If so, what is the scale of difference? And is this difference extreme enough to warrant the extinction of the one if its continued existence threatens the survival of the other? Which "species," then, humankind or pseudohumankind, has the moral right (*Android* is a very moral movie) to survive and which should be slain?

So it seems only fair that the humans trotted onstage ought to be as richly developed as possible, complex and three-dimensional. But they aren't; when Max 404 plays with a couple of little dolls, pretending that they are a man and woman, their dialogue and actions aren't particularly different from those of the "real" humans.

Android makes some clever little jokes on the Frankenstein theme, and considerable fun is had with high-tech gadgetry. One of the best scenes has Max 404 packing for a trip, taking along a spare eye and a little plastic boxful of extra fingers, just in case. And there are some not-very-optimistic demonstrations of what you might find yourself dialing for dinner when you take that trip to outer space. I must own that I found Max, now and then, just a wee bit too cute, but then I'm a cranky old party and didn't even like *Fantasia*, except for the "Night on Bald Mountain" sequence, so don't pay any mind to me.

Still, you end up feeling kind of sorry for Max, even if it looks as if he'll end up winning out over flesh and blood types such as ourselves, because when the fade-out comes, it looks as if he's going to have his share of problems. The improved android has just come to life and has turned out to be pretty formidable—in no way a nebbish like Max 404. He appears to have met more than his match, and will have his hands full with her around from now on. I left the theater confident that there would be plenty of times to come when Max would look back at the old days when there was nobody around but the computer and the mad scientist, before the improved android was turned on, and he'd get pretty wistful. Yessir.

But that's progress for you. 17

Nostalgia

The Kid from Krypton

by Ron Goulart

Those of you who know me only as a respected sci-fi author may be surprised, even shocked, to learn that I am also a long-term and unrepentant comics buff. In this latter capacity I haunt comics conventions, avidly peruse such publications as *The Comics Buyer's Guide*, *Comics Feature*, *The Comic Reader*, *The Comics Journal*, etc., and otherwise fritter away my valuable time. It was a recent issue of an admirable biweekly entitled *Amazing Heroes* that got me to thinking about the topic of today's lecture. This particular number was devoted to Superman and covered his comic-book, television, and movie career. The only trouble was that this Superman wasn't the fellow I'd admired as a kid, but a later multimedia icon. My Superman was sort of multimedia, too, I suppose, except the media were comic books, radio, and animated cartoons. The Superman of my long-ago youth wasn't the broad-shouldered, top-heavy fellow of today, and he didn't

have anywhere near the range of abilities. He wasn't as smug, either.

I first encountered him in the summer of 1939, when I purchased, for one thin dime, *Action Comics* #15. There was Superman on the cover, underwater but having no breathing problems, hefting a submarine. At the time I was six and a half years old and Superman was not quite a year and a half. He'd come along the spring of the year before, and I can no longer recall why I hadn't started collecting his adventures sooner. It could be that my mother had temporarily succeeded in dissuading me from dipping into such fantastic stuff. It might also have been that, since my father had just been through a months-long strike at his factory, we hadn't sufficient recreational income until that fateful summer. At any rate, I finally picked up on the Man of Steel and remained hooked for the next several years. As far as I was concerned, Jerry Siegel, the author, and Joe Shuster, the illustrator, were

"Modest in comparison to his latter-day exploits." The Superman of the early comic books contented himself with aiding orphanages and rescuing damsels.

ANOTHER INSTANT
AND WE'D HAVE
BEEN DESTROYED!

A MISS
IS AS GOOD
AS A MILE!

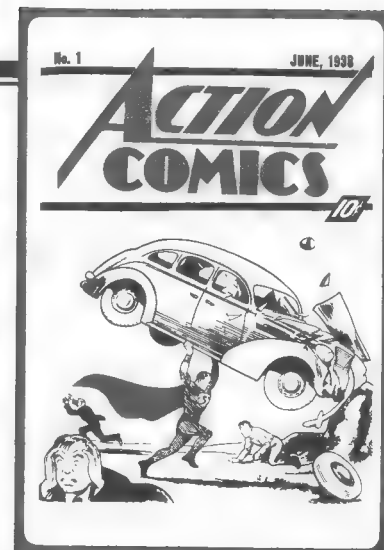


"He looked as though someone had inflated him with an air hose." Today's Superman is a shade less clean-cut and has become "all torso."

right up there with the greats of literature and art.

Superman's early adventures, from the spot where I began following the saga, were modest in comparison to his latter-day exploits. In *Action* #15, for instance, he sets out to earn a million dollars to aid an orphanage called Kidtown. This gets him involved in retrieving a sunken treasure and battling a dozen sharks. Next issue he saves a fellow from suicide and the puts the gamblers who drove him to it out of business. In those distant days, by the way, not everybody knew who Superman was; the hoods who are ordered to toss him out of the casino make boasts like, "We'll knock him silly!" Now and then Superman would tackle a "mad scientific genius" or a deadly purple plague, but he always had time for widows, orphans, and working stiffs. He was almost a Dear Abby with muscles.

As with Tarzan, whom I reminisced about a couple issues back, I had fluctuating feelings about Superman. At times I wanted to be him, especially when a school-yard bully tripped me or heckled me. How



This historic issue of *Action Comics* introduced the Man of Steel to the world.

Smilin' Jack, Charlie Chan, and Terry and the Pirates). I clipped the *Superman* Sundays and glued them into a *Superman* scrapbook. Eventually the second-string Hearst paper we did take added *Superman* to its daily list and I could follow his activities with less strain.

Some of the best-known lines associated with *Superman* originated not in the comics but on the radio show. This got going on a national basis early in 1940 and during its first few months, was heard mostly in the East. There were three fifteen-minute episodes each week, broadcast live; in most areas they aired on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday sometime between five and six in the afternoon,* which in those days was the children's hour. By 1941 the show, in recorded form, had reached my part of California and was being broadcast over KYA in San Francisco. The local sponsor was Skippy Peanut Butter, and I little dreamed, as I sat before our venerable Atwater Kent, that in my first years out of college I would earn my livelihood writing radio and television commercials about that very product.

It was this radio show, originating in New York City, that gave us such memorable phrases as "Up, up, and away!" and "This looks like a job for ... *Superman!*" The former was always followed by a great rush of wind, indicating that *Superman* had just taken off from a rooftop or out a window. The other always accompanied the transition from meek newperson to Man of Steel. The show's opening was built around two other unforgettable bits of copy. The first is "Faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive, able to leap tall buildings at a single bound." This was a variation of the introductory copy that Siegel had written for *Action* #1

satisfying it would've been to pick him up by his collar, leap to the roof of the Benjamin Franklin Grammar School, and deposit him there. X-ray vision would've come in handy, too, for getting an advance look at test answers and for watching girls disrobe. At other times, though, not up to the awesome responsibility of actually *being* *Superman*, I merely wished I had him as a friend or relative. Imagine him swooping down on the teacher who'd just whacked me over the knuckles with her ruler, grabbing it away, and breaking it in two. Or punching the kid who'd just thrown my brown-bag lunch over the school-yard fence. No matter how secure we seem on the outside, we're all of us Walter Mittys and ugly ducklings inside, and that's one of the reasons for *Superman's* tremendous appeal.

The Man of Steel got a newspaper strip of his own early in 1939. This must've cheered Siegel and Shuster, since they'd originally envisioned their hero as a comic-strip character and had been unsuccessfully trying to sell him that way for several years prior to his comic-book

debut. It's in the introductory newspaper strips that we first get a detailed account of the destruction of the planet Krypton and the baby *Superman's* being rocketed to Earth, like a streamlined Moses, in a ship of his scientist father's invention. *Action* #1 covered that in one caption, merely stating, "As a distant planet was destroyed by old age, a scientist placed his infant son within a hastily devised space-ship, launching it toward Earth." The strip devoted two whole weeks to *Superman's* pop, Jor-el, his mom, Lora, and all the dire events leading up to his emigration. By the third week *Superman*, now Clark Kent, is working as a mild-mannered reporter and has met Lois Lane. The stage is set. (His first paper, incidentally, was the *Daily Star*. And *Superman* couldn't actually fly back then; he was merely a very good leaper.)

In my native Bay Area the strip ran in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, daily and Sunday. Although this wasn't the paper we subscribed to, I cajoled my mother into letting me pick up the Sunday edition just about every week (you also got *Dick Tracy*,

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TM and © 1984 D.C. Comics, Inc.

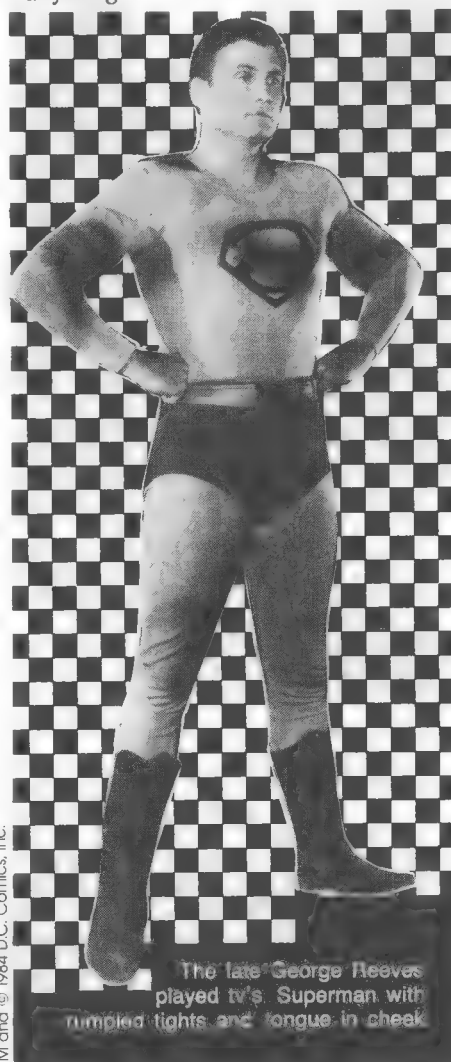
Nostalgia

and *Superman* #1, although the speeding bullet doesn't appear, and the locomotive was called a "streamline train." This extolling of Superman's abilities was followed by "Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's ... *Superman!*" the gentleman who yelled this for most of the show's life was Jackson Beck. He's still active as an announcer and voice man for radio and tv commercials. The first time I met him, at a radio fans' convention a few years ago, I was startled to hear that familiar deep awesome voice coming out of a plump jovial man not much taller than I am.

The part of Superman was played by Clayton "Bud" Collyer, a wavy-haired actor who went on to become one of the most successful quiz show MCs on early television with the long-running *Beat the Clock* and *To Tell the Truth*. As I recall, he never came across as overly sincere on the tube and had a good deal of the snake-oil pitchman about him, but as Kent/Superman on the blind medium of radio he was just right, turning with ease from schmuck-voiced reporter to macho-voiced hero. (That switch in voices must've inspired thousands of preadolescent boys across the nation, suggesting that they wouldn't be stuck with their piping little voices forever and that maybe, with a little practice, they could do something about lowering them right now.) Joan Alexander, who later was a staple of tv panel shows like *The Name's the Same*, was the trouble-prone Lois Lane. She was very good at conveying her disdain for the bespectacled Clark Kent and her admiration for the quietly macho, garishly garbed Superman.

In 1943 the radio show, now heard on all five weekdays, was picked up for national sponsorship by a Kellogg's cereal known as "Pep." This added yet another burden to my life. Although to the best of my recollection *Superman* offered no premiums that required the sending in of a boxtop and a dime, the insidious Kellogg folks did pack desirable objects inside the boxes of their dull, drab cereal. So if you wanted the model warplanes or the comic-strip character pins, you had to buy the stuff. (Well, you could also slit a box in the store and swipe the prize, but I was never bold enough for that sort of crime.) I may already have mentioned in these pages that there

was an inflexible law in our household about boxtops, labels, seals, etc. If I bought the product, I had to consume it. In a month during which Jack Armstrong, Tom Mix, and Captain Midnight were offering decoders, bombsights, and whistling rings, I knew I had to look forward to eating a big bowl of either Wheaties or Hot Ralston for breakfast and drinking a whole mug of Ovaltine at each and every bedtime. For some reason Rice Krispies, which I doted on, never seemed to sponsor anything.



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Bud Collyer and Joan Alexander also provided the voices for the *Superman* animated cartoons that reached the silver screen in the early 1940s. Released by Paramount Pictures, these were turned out by Max Fleischer and his brother Dave. Their studio also produced the Popeye cartoons, but the *Superman*

epics were nothing like them. Brightly colored, they were done in a broad-shouldered, angular style that looked something like 1930s WPA murals come to life. The emphasis was on action, with the Man of Steel wiping out mad scientists, Nazi agents, and Japanese spies. He also tackled animated mummies, crazed natives, and erupting volcanoes. The opening of each one was based on the intro of the radio show, although now and then the Fleischers would wax original and abandon the "speeding bullet" stuff. One cartoon opens with these encomiums: "Faster than a streak of lightning! More powerful than the pounding surf! Mightier than a roaring hurricane!" At the time the cartoons first showed up in theaters I was equally fond of Mickey Mouse, but I enjoyed *Superman* and felt pleased that a character I thought of as part of my kid world had made it into the big time of the movie palaces.

At the height of my interest in comic books, I haunted our local drugstore's newsstand. I knew exactly when the delivery trucks would drop the bundles of new magazines and precisely when the pharmacist would get around to cutting the cords and putting the brand-new comics on the racks. Up until I was about thirteen or fourteen, I spent a good deal of my spare time at that place. It was my pool hall, my country club.

Gradually, as the demands of academic life and puberty became stronger, I began to turn my back on comics. By that time *Superman* had changed his appearance and become all torso; he looked as though someone had inflated him with an air hose. His abilities increased and his adventures became more complex and cosmic. He wasn't the kind of fellow who had time for orphans and stray dogs anymore. I kept in touch with his exploits some, but only in the way you keep in touch with a distant relative you don't have much in common with. I never even watched the 1950s television show.

When *Superman* became a hot property again, I took a look at the Christopher Reeve movie version. But this wasn't my *Superman*, and I didn't become a born-again fan. Too bad, in a way, since there are still a few problems in my life that size up like jobs for *Superman*. It would be nice to fantasize that he was still available to lend a hand.

The Spider-Zone Crossword Puzzle

by Al Sarrantonio

Okay, so it doesn't look much like a spider. Big deal! Spiders don't *need* eight legs—at least not in the Twilight Zone.

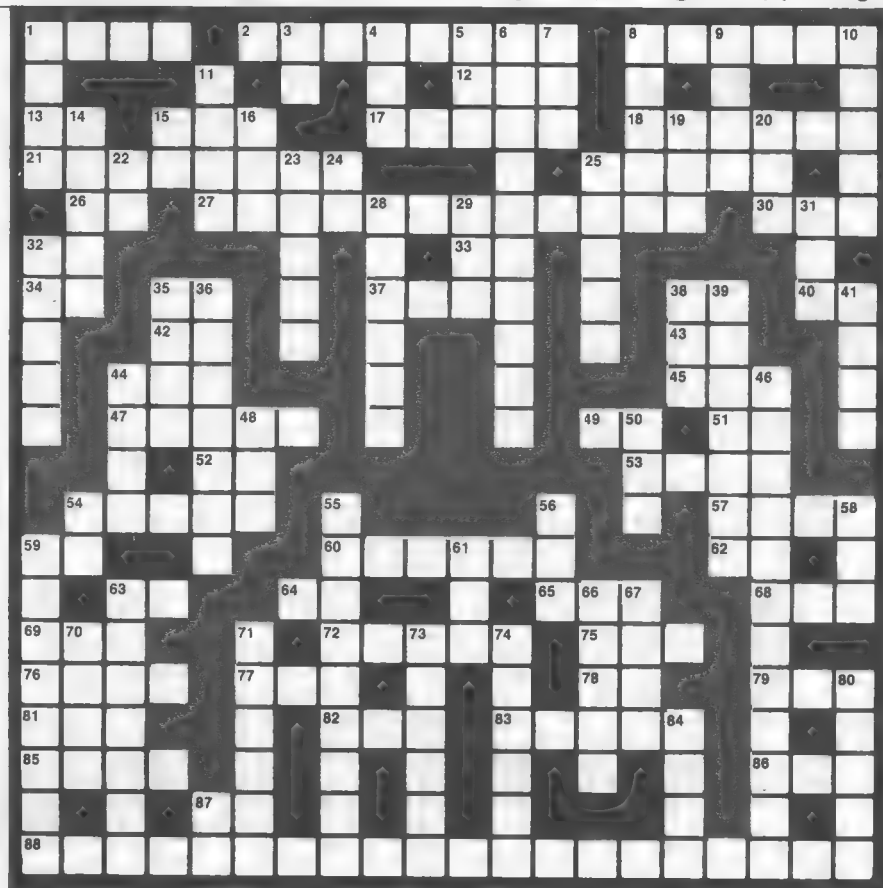
For those who get caught in its web of words, the answers are on page 100.

ACROSS

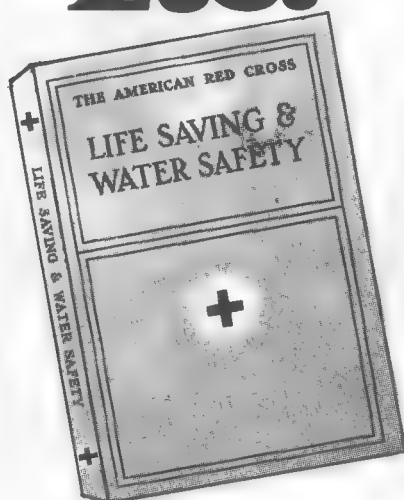
1. Down Easterner, ex-teacher, and part-time movie star; author of 73 Down.
2. Green pea soup: film.
8. With 1 Across, the other bestselling modern horror writer.
12. What a ghost says.
13. No good: slang.
15. What they served in Wonderland.
17. Anyone who gets caught by this slow-moving monster deserves to die.
18. What Norman Bates was.
21. He's always threatening Tokyo.
25. The _____ Generation.
26. James Bond film: Dr. _____.
27. Rod Serling's other tv series.
30. Powder left after something is burned.
32. Second note of what the giant sang.
33. 3.141592 etc.
34. Digest-sized magazine, lasted 175 issues. Full title, *Worlds of* _____.
35. Not you.
37. Victim of world's first murder.
38. *Wizard of Oz* auntie.
40. Famous gory comics line.
42. If you drink too much, you join this.
43. River in northern Italy.
44. What you say when it's cold.
45. *Twilight Zone* Santa; first name.
47. _____ naut.
49. Kind of train that used to run along New York's Third Avenue.
51. Wrote *The Mouse That Roared* (initials).
52. Laugh sound.
53. Weena was one.
54. Alka-Seltzer didn't help John Hurt in this film by Ridley Scott.
57. Music symbol; indicates pitch of notes on staff.
59. Controversial missile.
60. Ghost story writer whose name brings tears to your eyes.
62. _____-yi yippie yi-yo!
63. As stated or described.
64. What you watch 46 Down on.
65. There were five orange ones in Sherlock Holmes tale.
68. Land of John Norman stories.
69. _____ Thing.
72. Surpass.
75. _____, *Monster, Die*.
76. Gilgamesh, Odysseus, and Spiderman, for example.

DOWN

1. Fought 21 Across.
3. Film: *Rocketship* _____.
4. Kind of computer memory.
5. Big company; they use 4 Down.
6. Region in eastern Africa.
7. What a good girl or boy gets.
8. TV show, films, comic book, you name it: _____ man.
9. Bradbury and Harryhausen.
10. Wrote novel of 18 Across.
11. What Dracula taps into to get his favorite drink.
14. Thief (slang).
15. Short form, this magazine.
16. Boxer.
19. TV show: *I* _____.
20. Agency involved with 19 Down.
22. Musical note.
23. Lengths (abbr.).
24. Exclamation.
25. First name of horror star; has worked many times with 50 Down.
28. Different way to get around: Time _____.
29. 1 Down, for example.
31. H. Rider Haggard novel.
32. *Twilight Zone*'s dimension.
35. To Bradbury, it's heaven.
36. Made of clay or earth.
38. They're supposed to protect the environment.
39. They ate 53 Across.
41. Karloff's last film: *The Crimson* _____.
44. Ticket out of jail.
46. It lies between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge.
48. Run in the past.
50. Hammer films' Dracula.
54. No self-respecting movie madman would be caught dead without one.
55. Rhode Island horror writer.
56. Mind work.
58. Wookies bear it.
59. Wrote many great TZ scripts.
61. Lofty lyric poem; Billie Joe had one written to him.
63. Welcomed us to 46 Down.
66. Dostoyevsky work.
67. Go nicely with pendulums.
70. Back of shoe.
71. Director who likes to work with dead people.
73. She played with fire; novel by 1 Across.
74. "I want to trink your blod!": most famous Drac.
80. Lucas term; C-3PO is one.
84. Awful missing-link movie: Joan Crawford's last film.
87. He called home.



**Etc.
Etc.**



TZ UNDERWATER

The *Twilight Zone* may have claimed a few victims as far back as 1937. According to that year's edition of the American Red Cross's *Life Saving and Water Safety*, sent to us recently by Virginia-based cartoonist Maggie Wade (a good name for someone interested in water safety), a drowning swimmer, rescued too late, "may be said to have entered that twilight zone between life and death known as suspended animation, and death may ensue at any moment." A chapter on "Ice Accident Prevention" warns: "Beneath the ice is a perpetual twilight zone, and it is not only difficult but often impossible to locate the opening through which the rescuer descended, when he has to return to the surface for air."

QUOTE

"Badly written adventure fiction is our true antiliterature. Its protagonists are our real antiheroes. They move through unreal worlds amidst all sorts of noise and manage to perceive nothing meaningful or meaningfully."

— Samuel R. Delany, *The Jewel-Hinged Jaw*.

ROD SERLING DIMENSIONS OF IMAGINATION



FEBRUARY 24–MAY 3

MB
Museum of Broadcasting

TRIBUTE

New York's Museum of Broadcasting paid Rod Serling a unique tribute this spring with a major retrospective of his television career. The exhibition featured screenings of his work from the early plays for *Lux Video Theatre* and *Studio One* to his classic tv dramas *Patterns* and *Requiem for a Heavyweight*, as well as dozens of seldom-seen *Twilight Zone* episodes, many on tapes made specially for the occasion. Museum curator Ronald Simon hailed Serling as "one of

television's most creative and influential dramatists" and "a first-rate creator of challenging drama for twenty-five years, in spite of the changing fashions in television programming. In addition, he was an articulate spokesman for excellence in the industry, forever on guard against the threats of censorship and mediocrity." Concluded fellow tv dramatist Reginald Rose: "His name was magic then and his work is legend now."

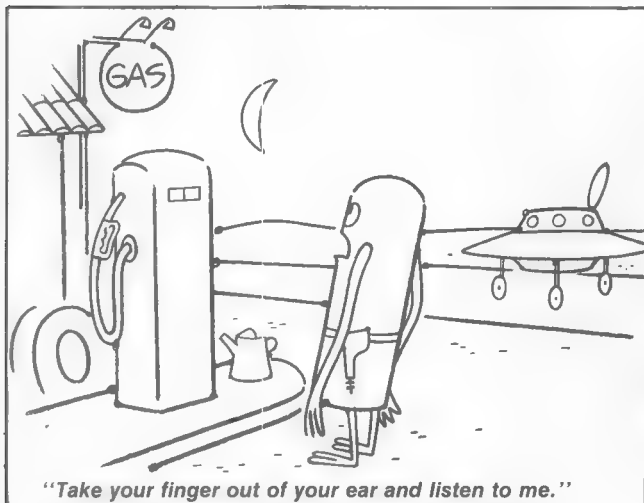


WEST OF FORT APACHE

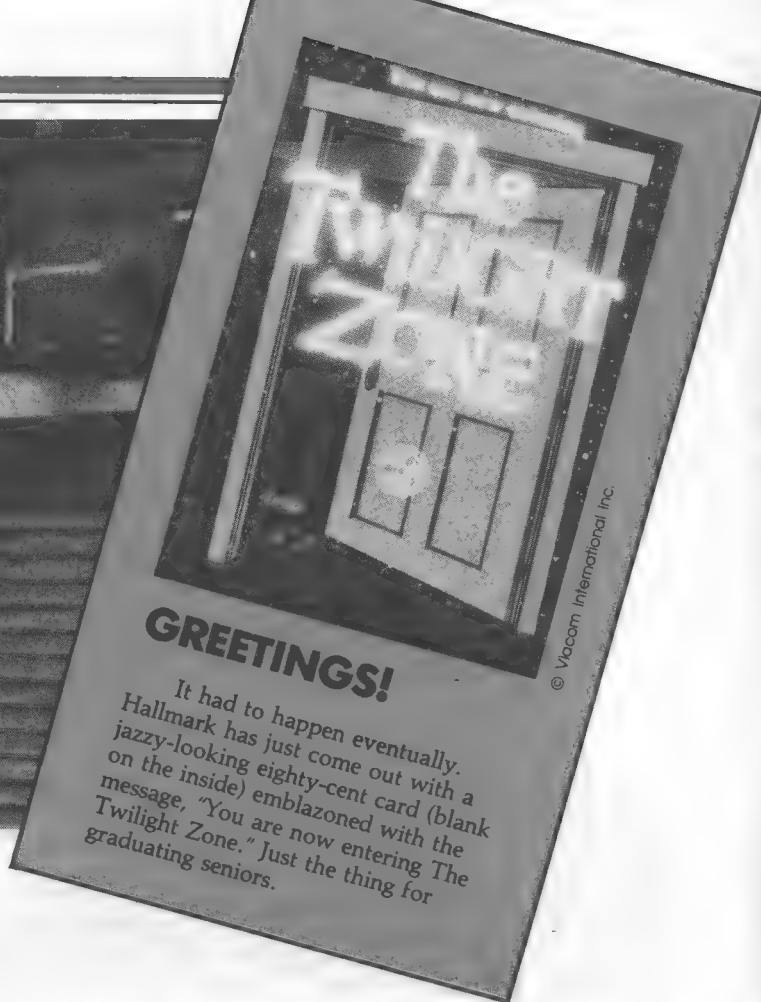
The East Tremont section of the Bronx would never be mistaken for a garden spot. "There are more fires up there in a single week than in all Steven King's novels combined," says local fire marshal Bill Groneman. "This area would have given Rod Serling nightmares."

But there's one place that Rod would have felt right at home, and Groneman has sent us this photo of it, taken by his partner Tony Roberti. He adds: "What the requirements for membership are can only be left open to speculation."

(One thing's for sure: they're probably very different from those of the club mentioned in this listing from a recent rare book catalogue: "Benton, Joel. MEMORIES OF THE TWILIGHT CLUB. New York: Broadway Pub., 1910. 115pp., plates. First edition. Original pictorial green cloth, gilt. Fine copy of this account of this late nineteenth century social club of New York's movers and shakers. Some literary activities and full roster of members.")



Vahan Shirvanian



TWILIGHT ZONE ON VENUS

Stanley G. Weinbaum's first published sf tale, "A Martian Odyssey," caused a minor sensation when it appeared in the July 1934 issue of *Wonder Stories*, for it treated alien life forms with a sympathy and maturity rare in the genre at that time. (Baird Searles's *Reader's Guide to Science Fiction* calls it "maybe the most auspicious debut in the history of s-f.") By December of the following year, Weinbaum was dead at the age of thirty-five. His work, however, most of it published posthumously, is still read and admired—by, among others, Ontario's David Seburn, who spotted this early "twilight zone" reference in Weinbaum's short story "The Lotus Eaters":

For Venus, of course, has no rotation, and hence no alternate days and nights. One face is forever sunlit, and one forever dark, and only the planet's slow liberation gives the twilight zone a semblance of seasons. And this twilight zone, the only habitable part of the planet, merges through the Hotlands on one side to the blazing desert, and on the other side ends abruptly in the ice barrier where the Upper Winds yield their moisture to the chilling breaths of the Underworld.

QUOTE

Mystery writer Edgar Wallace, author of more than four hundred books, in reply to a letter asking, "Don't you ever sleep?"

"My pet aversion is the man who asks me whether I ever sleep. I never—or very seldom—work more than six hours a day and usually sleep eight.... The reason I write such a lot is because I really do work in working hours."

Etc.

TZ IN THE PULPS

The phrase "the twilight zone" appears to have a longer and more distinguished ancestry than most people realize. Reader Steve Silverman has come across the words in a book by the late Cornell Woolrich. "Mr. Woolrich," he notes, "wrote psychological mysteries from the 1930s to the late '50s. He wrote so much that he had to use two pseudonyms—George Hopley and William Irish. It was as William Irish that he wrote the story 'Rear Window,' which Alfred Hitchcock turned into a film classic. It was also as Irish that he wrote a novel titled *Deadline at Dawn*. I recently came across the following passage from Chapter One of that novel:

"There was a doorway opposite them, or very nearly so. Left open to the street, but with the perils of ingress ameliorated to some slight extent by a faltering lemon-pale backwash that came from deep within it and failed to reach all the way to its mouth, leaving an intervening twilight zone."

Silverman notes that the novel was published in 1944, and adds: "Perhaps Mr. Serling was also a fan of Woolrich. Perhaps Woolrich picked up the phrase from some other writer. Perhaps someone else can trace the phrase back to some Lovecraftian era of pre-man primitivism. Or maybe it's just a coincidence. Or maybe not."

QUOTE

"Vanity is a motive of immense potency. Anyone who has much to do with children knows how they are constantly performing some antic, and saying, 'Look at me.' 'Look at me' is one of the fundamental desires of the human heart. It can take innumerable forms, from buffoonery to the pursuit of posthumous fame. There was a Renaissance Italian princeling who was asked by the priest on his death-bed if he had anything to repent of. 'Yes,' he said, 'there is one thing. On one occasion I had a visit from the Emperor and the Pope simultaneously. I took them to the top of my tower to see the view, and I neglected the opportunity to throw them both down, which would have given me immortal fame.' History does not relate whether the priest gave him absolution."

—Bertrand Russell, Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech.

Tom Heony.

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Harrison Ford: Always in Character

JAMES VERNIERE TALKS WITH FANTASY'S BIGGEST STAR.



Photo © 1983 Lucasfilm Ltd.

Everyone knows who Han Solo and Indiana Jones are, but does anyone know who Harrison Ford is? Ford, who played the mercenary space jockey in the *Star Wars* trilogy and the whip-toting archaeologist in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and its soon-to-be released sequel, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, is something of a mystery man in real life, so painfully withdrawn that an interview seems like torture for him.

What most people don't know about Ford is that, as an actor, he's been around a lot longer than his famed alter egos. Although his first major break came in 1973 when director George Lucas cast him as Bob Falfa in *American Graffiti*, Ford's acting career began ten years earlier in tv series like *Gunsmoke*, *Ironsides*, and *The F.B.I.*, and in films like *Dead Heat on a Merry-Go-Round* and *The Long Ride Home*.

Born and raised in Chicago (his father is in advertising), Harrison Ford began his acting career in summer stock, moving to California in 1963 to pursue work in film and television. He has two sons, ages fourteen and sixteen, by a previous marriage, and is now married to E.T. screenwriter Melissa Mathison.

TZ: What do you think the odds are against the same actor starring in three of the highest-grossing films in movie history?

Ford (shrugging): I don't know. Pretty astronomical, I guess.

TZ: Han Solo and Indiana Jones are surely the best-known characters you've

played. How would you describe them?

Ford: I think the key is that neither is an innately heroic person. Han Solo is a mercenary who learns about the quality of friendship. He also has a wicked sense of humor, which helps to make him charming. Indiana Jones is a scholar who rises to heroic occasions. He has no conception of himself as a hero.

TZ: How would you describe your experience making the *Raiders* films?

Ford: Physically taxing.

TZ: What attracted you to *Blade Runner*? Some suggest that you might have been pigeonholed as a science fiction actor.

Ford: *Blade Runner* was a big-city detective story transplanted to a science fiction environment, but it was really just an old-fashioned thriller with new twists and wrinkles. The *Star Wars* films had the trappings of science fiction, but they were fantasy.

TZ: What kind of relationship do you have with George Lucas and Steven Spielberg? Is it father-son or buddy-buddy?

Ford: Well (laughs), last night they wouldn't give me the keys to the car.

TZ: You seem uncomfortable doing interviews. Why?

Ford: Because I want enough confusion to reign about who Harrison Ford is that when my face is on the screen people don't say, "Oh, it's Harrison Ford." I want to be the character. I don't want to be me. **TZ**

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RIZZO'S ILLUSTRATIONS
WERE MASTERPIECES.
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THE WAY HE PAINTED THEM!

TEN THOUSAND PICTURES, ONE WORD

by Nancy Kress

At twenty-thirty, on a Thursday morning, just before the light bulb in his studio (which was also his kitchen) gave a despairing little pop and burned out, Kenny Rizzo finished his painting. He circled it critically, his head tipped to one side. His paint-spattered canvas shoes, the newest layers gold and black, squeaked on the cracked linoleum.

From the bedroom his wife Joanne called sleepily, "What was that noise, Kenny? Kenny?"

"Just the light bulb. Go to sleep, Hon." By the dim rectangle of light shining from the hall he groped his way to a cupboard, looking for a candle and matches.

"The light bulb? What did it do?"

"No, not yet," Kenny said, hearing her voice as only a texture of sounds, mostly flat. "Almost done. Go to sleep."

"I'll get a new bulb tomorrow, then, when I shop."

"Right after I clean up. Good night."

By candlelight the painting looked even better. The magazine people should be incredibly pleased. Incredibly! And why not? It was a beautiful job, and it fit the story exactly. Kenny was always careful to read the story he was illustrating; he prided himself on being one of those who got the hair color right, the eyes the same shade that the author casually mentioned on page three. It was part of doing the job right. And this one was right, was beautiful, was a fantasy nude of surpassing life and complexity. The editor of the men's magazine was going to love it. Every long line of the nude's golden-skinned body was caressed by a magical light: the curve of hip and weight of breast and smooth, taut arms stretched up to the tiny red dragon hovering in the air above her. Long black hair, confined at the crown by a diamond circlet, cascaded in deep waves clear to the girl's long, slim legs. On the ground lay a jewel-topped cut-glass bottle which Kenny had copied from a fifteenth-century drawing. The story, a witty fantasy concerning Lucrezia Borgia, a misplaced bottle of poison, and a lustful dragon, was called "Alchemy Con Brío." Kenny had carefully left a small space for the title and another, larger space for the author's very famous name. This particular author, he knew, complained regularly and bitterly if his very famous name were not prominent, and Kenny wanted no flak about this picture. He was too much in love with it.

With a satisfied sigh he began cleaning his brushes by candlelight.

"Would you like some more coffee?" Joanne said at breakfast. "By the way, Kenny, that last picture of yours is a little . . . odd, isn't it?"

"Yes, please," Kenny said from behind the newspaper. "Just half a cup."

"Just not at all in your . . . your regular

TEN THOUSAND PICTURES, ONE WORD

stream."

"And sugar," Kenny said. "No, don't wash up, I'll do that. You'll be late for the office." The Rizzos were scrupulous about dividing up the housework, since both held jobs. Kenny always did his share; was, in fact, glad to do his share. Fair was fair.

"I *did* wash up, for all practical purposes," Joanne said. "There's only your cup left. Honestly, Kenny—you sat right there and watched me do it. Well, I'm off." She kissed the top of Kenny's head and dashed for the subway. Kenny finished his coffee and newspaper. Then he strolled into the living room, where Joanne had moved the easel when she made breakfast, to inspect his painting.

It was not the same painting.

The dragon was there, the cut-glass bottle was there, the diamond circlet was there. Even a girl was there, but not the same girl. The nude in this painting was plump—no, she was *fat*. Heavy rolls of flesh hung on her belly, buttocks, and thighs, which were much shorter in proportion to her torso than the girl Kenny had painted last night. Her skin was not golden but a pale, anemic pink, as though she never went out into the sun. Under the diamond circlet her hair hung in elaborate frizzes and knobby braids. Even her eyes were different—slightly sunken, with heavy lids and sparse, high brows, odd eyes, and yet strangely familiar . . .

Kenny, perfectly still, looked at the painting for two entire minutes. Then he crossed the room to the plastic shelf where his art books were kept, flipped frantically through one, and then began to leaf carefully at one section. Botticelli, da Vinci, Giorgione, early Titian.

Solid, pale, heavy-lidded women. Thick of thigh, short of leg, heavy of belly. His painting was not of the same quality—the light was crude and the composition poor—but it was of the same sort of woman. Botticelli, da Vinci. Giorgione, Titian.

Dazed, Kenny scanned the dates for each painter. They had all worked in the Italian Renaissance, in the same century as Lucrezia Borgia.

He looked again at the girl on the easel. She was smiling an enigmatic, Mona Lisa smile.

The editor of *American Male* hated the painting. He suggested caustically that Kenny try it at *Weight Watcher's Magazine*. Under the sarcasm he sounded incredulous, but not as incredulous as Kenny. Kenny didn't try to tell him what had happened. He told no one. What *had* happened? There was no way to even think about it himself, much less explain it to anyone else.

Kenny and Joanne regretted the loss of the money. They had been going to do something frivolous with it, something wonderful but as yet unspecified, undiscussed. Kenny's next assignment wouldn't be nearly as lucrative. It was for the science fiction magazine *Macromyths*, illustrating a story that was a

deliberate parody of its pulp days, and the editor wanted a two-color drawing that would recall the artwork from the thirties but be even more improbable. An affectionate parody, he said. Kenny liked the idea. He was too young to recall the thirties pulps, but he thought he knew what the editor wanted.

"Did you see the paper yet, Kenny? What happened to the C section?" Joanne said.

A bug-eyed monster, of course. Green. With tentacles.

"Here it is . . . colder tonight. Maybe we should cover the roses?"

And a girl. There would have to be a girl, in a bronze bra. No, make that a platinum bra. With a padlock!

"Joseph Kraft has a good editorial here on the congressional budget. Did you see it? Kenny?"

The BEM would menace the girl. He could hold the key to the padlock, having stolen it from . . .

"Kenny, I thought we were talking. Did you see the Kraft editorial, next to that one on the FBI frame?"

"No, he wants it unframed. Look, we'll discuss it later, okay, Hon? I want to start this sketch."

"But Kenny—"

He worked fast. First the monster—lightly, keep it light, a deft parody. He gave it a slight grin. Then the girl. She took longer. Kenny lingered over her, tarrying over each sweet line. She was blond, of course, and young, her hair curved into a thirties pageboy, soft and full. The platinum bra was cut low over full breasts curving into a narrow waist. A filmy blue skirt billowed from the platinum belt and fell in neat folds except where one slim, high-arched foot parted the folds to flee in terror. One hand, raised, failed to cover her full-lipped scream. Her eyes were blue: wide, heavy-lashed, innocent. A feminine morsel, totally helpless! Perfect! He worked on her side of the sketch for most of the afternoon, and then went to play basketball. Under his hand the ball curved sweet and tender.

Joanne had a dinner meeting or something, Kenny couldn't remember what. He grabbed a *brik* at an Arab deli, picked up the laundry at the dry cleaners (fair is fair), and bought some strudel. Back at his apartment, he opened his portfolio for another look at the thirties parody, and dropped it on the floor.

Fleeing from his tentacled grinning BEM was Eleanor Roosevelt.

No—it wasn't her. But the woman in the painting *did* share two of her characteristics: the long, horsey face and the expression of intelligent determination. She was a plain woman with short brown hair and a stocky body, and she looked squarely from the paper at the thirties world of Depression, dustbowls, and coming war. She wore a blue skirt, cut on the bias from some serviceable material, flat-heeled tie shoes, dark stockings, and a padlocked platinum bra.

Kenny picked the sketch off the floor. His

Fleeing from the tentacled bug-eyed monster was Eleanor Roosevelt.

hands trembled. Ripping the paper into tiny shreds and then into even tinier ones, he started to babble. When he stopped, he wanted to piece the thing back together again, to show it—to whom?—but it was too late. Eleanor Roosevelt was too shredded to put back together again.

Later, awake until dawn, he decided it was just as well.

He resolved not to do any more historical pieces. From now on, strictly contemporary or future stories. The editor of *Crimecapades* wanted an illustration of a prison break. Kenny finished the sketch late at night, tossed in bed for three or four hours, then padded out to the kitchen to peer fearfully at his drawing board. The sketch looked exactly the same as when he had finished it. In the morning it still looked the same. Kenny went back to bed and slept until noon. The craziness, whatever it had been, was over.

He did a color painting of a space capsule. He did a pencil sketch of a hard-boiled detective (1983 style: Frye boots and one earring). He did a small-town Main Street, ominously deserted under strong sunlight. They all stayed the same as he drew them.

The editor of *Journey*, a slick, well-thought-of magazine, wanted an illustration for a contemporary ghost story. Kenny read the manuscript, "The Ghosts of the Barbizon," and liked it. It took place in a women's hotel in Manhattan. He made some quick sketches, then stretched a canvas and laid down a wash for the painting. Halfway though, Joanne came home from wherever she'd been.

"Hi, I'm home!"

"Hi, Hon."

"Anyone call?"

"No. Yes. No, I guess not. Only your mother."

"Kenny, there's something I'd like to talk to you about. Is this a good time, or should I wait until later?"

"No, no, this is fine. Shoot."

"Kenny—we never talk any more."

"Sure we do."

"No. Not really."

"We're talking right now."

"That's not what I mean. We never . . . share. I don't mean housework and expenses and that shit-

work. You're—we're—good on that. Sex, too. But I mean, you don't ever tell me what's really going on in your head. Or in your work. We don't talk."

Kenny considered what had been going on in his work. Or in his head. But that craziness—that was over. He considered Joanne. It was cold out; her nose was still red, with one wet drop on the end. She looked earnest, with a faint underlay of anger. Kenny couldn't exactly remember how long they had been married.

"I'm sorry, Hon," he said. "It's just that a couple of things haven't been working too well lately. I'll try to talk more."

"But I don't want you to have to try," Joanne said. "I mean, I want you to share things with me because you want to, not because you want to please me, Kenny. Kenny?"

"You're right," Kenny said. "I'll try."

Joanne made a strange noise, somewhere between choking and spitting. "Look, if I leave something here, will you read it? It's right here in this magazine. I'll leave it folded to the page. Will you read it, when you're done working?"

"Sure, Hon."

Joanne made the noise again and went to the bedroom to gather up the dirty laundry (fair is fair).

Kenny finished laying down the wash and began on the woman in the foreground of the picture. She was the Barbizon's director; make her thirty-five. Mature, but youthful. Soft brown hair in tumbled waves. Delicate shoulders under the expensive cherry-red sweater, full breasts. Kenny worked slowly, lovingly. She wore an A-line skirt of grey wool, cinched at the slender waist and flaring out at the curve of hips. Ankles shown off in high heels with delicate ankle straps; ankle bones to match the shoulders. She stood with her back to the building and its strange distortions (this due to the ghosts), so her expression was still unruffled, serene, faintly smiling at whatever she was looking at just off the canvas.

Kenny, just off the canvas, smiled back.

In a few days the painting was done. Kenny finished it at noon and decided to celebrate—he felt that good about it. Who? Carl, of course, his best friend. Carl was free for lunch. Kenny met him at his office on Sixth Avenue and they had an enormous lunch of steaks, good beer, terrific cheesecake. The weather was cold. Kenny decided to walk back to the apartment for the air and the exercise. All the way he hummed, pretending he was singing to the woman in the painting. She laughed and twitched her grey skirt at him. He hummed louder and walked faster, pretending he was not uneasy.

At first, from one glance across the length of the room, he thought that nothing had changed. From across the room the woman on the easel looked the same: cherry-red sweater and grey wool skirt. But then she didn't. Coming closer, unwinding his muffler in a damp-wool explosion of panic, Kenny saw that

she didn't look the same at all.

Her shoulders were broader, more athletic. The wasp waist had thickened and the hips slimmed, so that her body was more tubular, less curvy. The ankles were thicker, and instead of strappy high heels she wore Dockside's with rubber soles. The whole body looked strong and healthy, alert for action. The woman's expression was alert as well; she had half turned toward the Barbizon in the background, and Kenny had a clear view of the tiny wrinkles around her clear eyes and the grey streaking her hair.

He took two steps backward, then two more. The last step brought him on top of the folded magazine Joanne had left on the floor, and mechanically he picked it up, never taking his eyes from the easel. He raised the magazine like a club and advanced on the picture. His hand shook and the magazine unfolded a little. Stopping to roll it tighter, he caught sight of the article Joanne had marked: MALE-FEMALE COMMUNICATION—JUST WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS? On the opposite page, surrounded by a Della Robbia wreath of running shoes, measuring tape, granola, and bikini underwear, was another article. The illustration was poor, but Kenny slowly unfolded the magazine and began to read:

Is the female body changing? Yes, say two medical researchers at the University of Florida. Statistics kept over a forty-year period indicate that the female form has become straighter and more muscular, with increased inches in the waist and decreased inches in hips and breasts. While some observers claim this is due mainly to the freedom from tight lacing, padding, and girdling that produced yesterday's exaggerated "feminine" curves, the Florida doctors disagree. Instead, they cite increased exercise, better nutrition, and a different attitude toward their bodies on the part of women themselves.

Looking at each of these factors in turn . . .

"Oh, I meant to tell you how much I like the painting," Joanne said, coming out of the bathroom. Dressed in her bathrobe, she was drying her hair with a big fluffy towel. "It's different from your usual style, isn't it? I really think it's an improvement. She looks so . . . I don't know . . . real."

"Thank you," Kenny said mechanically. He looked from Joanne to the painting, then back again. Joanne was combing her fingers through her wet hair, pushing it into place. He had never noticed before that it was turning grey.

He could stop drawing. He could see a psychiatrist. He could draw only men, inanimate objects, or landscapes. He could get so drunk that none of it mattered. He could get someone else to verify that what was happening—whatever it was—was in fact happening. Those were the options.

If he stopped drawing, they'd starve. Well, no

—not starve; after all, Joanne made more than he did. But things would be tight. As it was, they were too tight to afford a psychiatrist. Painting only men, inanimate objects, and landscapes would cut his income in half. It would also cut out the paintings closest to his heart. Getting drunk sounded tempting, but the problem there was that eventually he would have to get sober again.

He phoned Carl and asked him to come watch him draw.

"Watch you draw? You mean, like come see the picture when it's done and give you my opinion?"

"No. Watch me draw. Really, I need you, Buddy. I've got a . . . a block. You know, like writer's block."

"How is having me sit there watching going to unblock you?"

"I don't know. I just feel it will."

"Well, you creative types are all a little weird. You should see the designer we got now. Okay, when do I come?"

"I'll call you. Just as soon as I get the right next assignment."

The right next assignment terrified him with its implications.

It came from *Illusions and Interstellars*, the most "literary" of the sf magazines. A famous fantasy writer, one of the best, had written a bittersweet tale about two young lovers in a grim and dying post-holocaust world. The story was set two hundred years in the future.

Kenny decided to draw the girl on a beach. He sketched the background: rocks, waves, a stunted post-holocaust tree. Then he called Carl.

"Why didn't you tell me you were going to ask Carl over?" Joanne said.

"You don't mind, do you?"

"No, of course I don't mind."

"I thought you liked Carl."

"I do like Carl. I just wish you'd mentioned it earlier, is all. I thought maybe we could talk."

"About what?"

"Kenny . . . did you read that article I showed you?"

Kenny tried to think what article she meant. All that came to mind was the Della Robbia wreath of running shoes.

"You didn't, did you?" Joanne said. She closed her eyes, then opened them again. "Well, all right. It doesn't matter. But, Kenny, I would like us to just sit and talk. Sometime soon. Okay?"

"Sure, Hon. Whenever you say."

"No, not whenever—sometime definite. Tomorrow night, okay?"

"That's the bell, it's Carl."

"Kenny . . ."

"Sure, Hon, anytime. But listen, I have to talk something over with Carl now, okay?"

Carl was in a jovial mood. He tried to joke



around with Joanne, but for some reason she wouldn't go along with it and slammed out of the apartment shortly after Carl arrived. Kenny gave Carl a big Scotch-and-water and set down to work.

He drew the girl with careful attention. Nude to mid-hip, breasts high and small—she was young, young—and erect, dainty nipples. The wonderful thing was her hair. A sea wind had caught and blown it wildly; it fanned about her head in tendrils like writhing lengths of heavy silk, between and through which the girl laughed at her unseen lover (Kenny had decided not to draw him). So lovingly did he shade each lock of that glorious hair that it was midnight before he finished. Joanne still had not come home. Carl lay asleep in his chair, five Scotch glasses on the floor beside him. Kenny woke him up.

"Carl. Carl, c'mon now, Buddy, wake up. Wake up, Carl. You have to see my picture."

"I see it. Ver' nice."

"No, listen, look at it. Really look."

"I look at it."

"Closely, Carl, closely—no, I mean it. What do you see? Tell me what you see!"

Carl squinted, shook his head, scrutinized the picture. "I see a girl."

"Describe her."

Carl opened his mouth, closed it, and then tried a wolf whistle. It came out a belch, on two pitches.

"Good enough," Kenny said. "Now listen, Carl. You have to take the picture home with you."

"Home?"

"Yes. Don't argue—just take it home for me. Here, I'll get it ready."

Kenny slipped the drawing between two pieces of cardboard. He put the cardboard in a cushioned mailer and the whole thing in a waterproof bag. Then he walked Carl down to the street, found him a cab, climbed back to the apartment, and went to bed. He plunged immediately into a deep, dreamless black sleep.

In the morning Kenny shot out of bed. Joanne was gone; she must have left early for the office. If Kenny hurried, he could catch Carl before he left for work. For the whole length of the trip on the uptown subway, Kenny kept his eyes closed, humming wordlessly. The other passengers left a small clear circle all

around him.

Carl was bleary but sober. Kenny dragged him by the arm to the plastic-bagged envelope, unwrapped it, and pulled out the cardboard folder.

"Open it, Carl. You open it."

"You're acting very weird, Buddy, you know that?"

"Yes. Just open it."

Carl opened the folder. "Well?"

"Well," Kenny said slowly.

"Well what?"

"Nothing. Well nothing," Kenny said. The picture looked the same: nude girl, fantastic hair, somber beach. Exactly the same. Kenny put his head in his hands.

"You want to tell me what this is all about?" Carl said.

"Yes. I do. Only it's such a long story. Or no—it's no story at all. Now."

"Kenny, you're not making sense."

"I know."

"Look, Buddy, I have to go to work now. Christ, I'm already late. But I'll come over tonight after dinner and you can tell me what's on your mind, okay? Is tonight all right? You got anything going?"

"No," Kenny said. He was still looking at the girl.

"Then I'll see you tonight. Hey, lock the door behind you when you leave, okay?"

Back home, Kenny took a shower. He read the morning newspaper: STOCK MARKET DECLINES, ELIZABETH TAYLOR TO MARRY, BRUINS EDGE FLYERS 4-3. He vacuumed the living room, made the beds, washed the dishes. Joanne called to suggest dinner out at a Greek restaurant; Kenny said that Carl was coming over to talk about something important. There was a long silence on the other end of the phone and then the line went dead. Kenny figured that they had been cut off, but when he tried to call Joanne back no one picked up the phone at her desk. The phone company must be having problems again.

The mail came, and with it a story to illustrate for a fanzine called *Googolplex*. It was a low-paying, no-prestige market, but *Googolplex* had published Kenny's first sketch and he regarded drawing for it as a sentimental *noblesse oblige*. He made himself a cup of coffee, and settled in to read the story, which turned out to be awful.

The title was "Kalja of the Far Seas." The story took place on a barbaric Earth a thousand years into the future and concerned the exploits of Kalja, a barbarian warrior-queen who had the help of telepathic plants in defending her tribe, her title, and her unspecified number of seas (Kenny never did learn what they were far from). The telepathic plants thought in Cockney.

Groaning, Kenny got out paper and pencil and began to sketch. Something rough, not too time-

TEN THOUSAND PICTURES, ONE WORD

consuming. It was the sort of predictable sketch he could do with his eyes closed. As he worked, however, he began to get interested. Kalja took form in his mind, then under his pencil. Oh, she was magnificent! Not sweet, like the post-holocaust girl. This one was ice cold, a splendid bitch. Black hair, slanting cheekbones, challenging green eyes—it was a black-and-white sketch, but Kenny *knew* they were green. Deadly. She wore a leather shift that left bare her long legs, which were spread apart and braced aggressively on the earth (grass? rock? fungi?—he would figure it out).

Beside Kalja, Kenny sketched the vague outline of a forest, a few adoring male underlings, and a thoughtful-looking plant. In the sky he drew the Big Dipper, slightly flattened into the configuration it would have in a thousand years, to let the cognoscenti know how much time had passed (he looked up the configuration in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*). When he was done, Kalja stared at him icily. Oh, to live a thousand years from now!

Carefully he wrapped the drawing for mailing, wrote a brief note to the editor, and sealed the package. Tomorrow he would mail it.

He felt hungry. He ate a sandwich, surprised to see that it was past dinner time. Joanne hadn't come home. Was she having dinner with a friend tonight? Must be.

Idly, he wandered to the living room and poked at the plastic bag he had given Carl with the drawing of the young post-holocaust girl. He slid out the picture, and he froze.

It had happened.

The picture's background remained the same: rocks, beach, stunted tree. But the girl did not. A few hours in his apartment—not Carl's!—and she was entirely different. Her face was young, and not young. Youth lay in the curve of cheek, still half baby fat, and the firm little chin. But the eyes were old with misery. Her breasts drooped, shapeless dugs, and the rough brown cloth around her hips did not conceal the bulge of pregnancy. Her hair—that magnificent hair!—hung in dull greasy ropes, and the girl gazed not laughingly at an unseen lover but hopelessly at the horizon, where no ship sailed.

Kenny moaned. Then he remembered that this story had been set only two hundred years in the future. For a moment he sat numb, before leaping up and running to the package with the picture of Kalja, eight hundred years later still. His fingers refused to tear the envelope. Frantically he searched for a knife, slit the package, and pulled out his sketch of the warrior-queen.

The paper was blank.

No, not blank. The vague outline of a forest was there, and the male underlings, and the flattened Big Dipper, and even the plant. But the woman was gone. Not changed into something else, something more real, as the others had been. Just gone.

Kenny grabbed the phone. His hand shook as he dialed Carl's number.

"Carl! They're gone!"

"Who is this?"

"It's me, Kenny! Listen, they're gone! All the women—they're going to leave!"

"What women? Hey, Buddy, calm down. What are you talking about?"

"The women, the women! They're all going to leave, Carl!"

"Women? You mean, like Joanne? Joanne is leaving you?"

"Joanne? No, listen, Carl—get this straight. Sometime in the future, sometime between two hundred and a thousand years from now, all the women are going to leave the planet entirely. The men will still be here, but the women will all leave somehow, just take off and go, and all that'll be left is blank paper!"

There was a long silence on the other end of the phone, then Carl's voice saying warily, "Kenny . . . hey, Buddy . . . Kenny . . ."

"Oh, I know I told it badly, you don't know what's been going on here, but they *are* going to leave, I know it, all the pictures have been changing and if—the editor turned down the painting for the Barbizon story and I don't want to spend the rest of my life drawing small-town Main Streets, but it isn't even that, it's the not knowing—"

"Look, I'll be there in twenty minutes. Don't do anything, anything at all—Kenny? Is Joanne there?"

"—not knowing *why*. Why should they go? What could they want that they don't have here? What?"

"Is Joanne there?" Carl said, speaking very slowly and clearly, as if to a sick child. "Where's Joanne?"

"Joanne? Out somewhere. Carl, have you been listening? They're going to go, and I can't figure out where, or why. That's the thing—*why*. There's no reason."

"Twenty mintues, Kenny. I'll be there in twenty minutes. Just sit tight, Buddy."

"What will I draw?" Kenny said, and hung up the phone.

Outside the apartment it grew dark. Kenny sat cross-legged on the floor, holding the blank paper where Kalja of the Far Seas had been. His panic began to turn to anger, then to loss. Loss—he would have to draw small-town Main Streets. And eventually no one would draw bitch-queens or sweet young loves or girls menaced by monsters. Not only him—*no one*, once the models for all those wonderful fantasy nudes had all left! No one! And for no reason!

Anger began again to take over. (No one. And for no reason.) Kenny sat muttering. Outside it grew darker.

Joanne did not come home.

"No reason at *all*," Kenny said. 17

CONCUBINES MINGLE WITH MAGICIANS
AND DWARFS, DRAGONS RULE THE WAVES,
AND MIRACLES ARE COMMONPLACE IN...

CATHAY

by Steven Millhauser

SINGING BIRDS

The twelve singing birds in the throne room of the Imperial Palace are made of beaten gold, except for the throats, which are of silver, and the eyes, which are of transparent emerald-green jade. The leaves of the great tree in which they sit are of copper, and the trunk and branches of opaque jade, the whole painted to imitate the natural colors of leaf, stem, and bark. When they sit on the branches, among the thick foliage, the birds are visible as only a glint of gold or flash of jade, although their sublime song is readily heard from every quarter of the throne room, and even in the outer hall. The birds do not always remain in the leaves, but now and then rise from their branches and fly about the tree. Sometimes one settles on the shoulder of the Emperor and pours into his ear the notes of its melodious and melancholy song. It is known that the tones are produced by an inner mechanism containing a minute crystalline pin, but the secret of its construction remains well guarded. The series of motions performed by the mechanical birds is of necessity repetitive, but the art is so skillful that one is never aware of recurrence, and indeed only by concentrating one's attention ruthlessly upon the motions of a single bird is one able, after a time, to discover at what point the series begins again, for the motions of all twelve birds are different and have been cleverly devised to draw attention away from any one of them. The shape and motions of the birds are so lifelike that they might easily be mistaken for real birds were it not for their golden forms, and many believe that it was to avoid such a mistake, and to increase our wonder, that the birds were permitted in this manner alone to retain the appearance of artifice.

CLOUDS

The clouds of Cathay are of an unusual purity of whiteness, and distinguish themselves clearly against the rich lapis lazuli of our skies. Perhaps for this reason we have been able to classify our cloud-shapes with a precision and thoroughness unknown to other lands. It may safely be said that no cloud in our heavens can assume a shape which has not

already been named. The name is always of an object, natural or artificial, that exists in our empire, which is so vast that it is said to contain all things. Thus a cloud may be Wave Number One, or Wave Number Six Hundred Sixty-Two, or Dragon's Tail Number Seven, or Wind in Wheat Number Forty-Five, or Imperial Saddle Number Twenty-Three. The result of our completeness is that our clouds lack the vagueness and indecision that sadden other skies, and are forbidden randomness except in the order of appearance of images. It is as if they are a fluid form of sculpture, arranging themselves at will into a succession of imitations. The artistry of our skies, for one well-trained in the catalogues of shape, does not cause monotony by banishing the unknown; rather, it fills us with joyful surprise, as if, tossing into the air a handful of sand, one should see it assume, in quick succession, the shape of dragon, hourglass, stirrup, palace, swan.

THE CORRIDORS OF INSOMNIA

When the Emperor cannot sleep, he leaves his chamber and walks in either of two private corridors, which have been designed for this purpose and have become known as the Corridors of Insomnia. The corridors are so long that a man galloping on horseback would fail to reach the end of either in the space of a night. One corridor has walls of jade polished to the brightness of mirrors. The floor is covered with a scarlet carpet and the corridor is brightly lit by the fires of many chandeliers. In the jade mirrors, divided by vertical bands of gold, the Emperor can see himself endlessly reflected in depth after depth of dark green, while in the distance the perfectly straight walls appear to come to a point. The second corridor is dark, rough, and winding. The walls have been fashioned to resemble the walls of a cave, and the distance between them is highly irregular; sometimes they come so close together that the Emperor can barely force his way through, while at other times they are twice the distance apart of the jade walls of the straight corridor. This corridor is lit by sputtering torches that leave long spaces of blackness. The floor is earthen and littered with stones; an occasional dark puddle reflects a torch.

HOURGLASSES

The art of the hourglass is highly developed in Cathay. White sand and red sand are most common, but sands of all colors are widely used, although many prefer snow-water or quicksilver. The glass containers assume a lavish variety of forms; the monkey hourglasses of our Northeast provinces are justly renowned. Exquisite erotic hourglasses, often draped in translucent silks, are seen in the home of every nobleman. Our Emperor has a passion for hourglasses; aside from his private collection there are innumerable hourglasses throughout the vast reaches of the Imperial Palace, including the gardens and parks, so that the Turner of Hourglasses and his many assistants are continually busy. It is said that the Emperor carries with him, sewn into his robe, a tiny golden hourglass, fashioned by one of the court miniaturists. It is said that if you stand in any of the myriad halls, chambers, and corridors of the Imperial Palace, and listen intently in the silence of the night, you can hear the faint and never-ending sound of sand sifting through hourglasses.

CONCUBINES

The Emperor's concubines live in secluded but splendid apartments in the Northwest Wing, where the mechanicians and miniaturists are also lodged. The proximity is not fanciful, for the concubines are honored as artificers. The walk of a concubine is a masterpiece of lubricity in comparison to which the tumultuous motions of an ordinary woman carried to rapture by the act of love are a formal expression of polite interest in a boring conversation. For an ordinary mortal to witness the walk of a concubine, even accidentally and through a distant lattice-window, is for him to experience a destructive ecstasy far in excess of the intensest pleasures he has known. These unfortunate courtiers, broken by a glance, pass the remainder of their lives in a feverish torment of unsatisfied longing. The concubines, some of whom are as young as fourteen, are said to wear four transparent silk robes, of scarlet, rose-yellow, white, and plum, respectively. What we know of their art comes to us by way of the eunuchs, who enjoy their privileged position and are

BOREDOM

not always to be trusted. That art appears to depend in large part upon the erotic paradoxes of transparent concealment and opaque revelation. Mirrors, silks, the dark velvet of rugs and coverlets, transparent blue pools in the concealed courtyard, scarves and sashes, veils, scarlet and jade light through colored glass, shadows, implications, illusions, duplicates of disclosure, a profound understanding of motives of disguise—such are the tools of the concubines' art. Although they live in the palace, they have about them an insubstantiality, an air of legend, for they are never seen except by the Emperor, or, who is divine, by the attendant eunuchs, who are not real men, and by such courtiers as are half-mad with tormented longing and cannot explain what they have seen. It has been said that the concubines do not exist; the jest contains a deep truth, for like all artists they live so profoundly in illusion that gradually their lives grow illusory. It is not too much to say that these high representatives of the flesh, these lavish expressions of desire, live entirely in spirit; they are abstract as scholars; they are our only virgins.

DWARFS

Our boredom, like our zest, can only be as great as our lives. How much greater and more terrible, then, must be the boredom of our Emperor, which flows into every corridor of the palace, spills into the parks and gardens, stretches to the utmost edges of our unimaginably vast empire, and, still not exhausted, but perhaps even strengthened by such exercise, rises to the height of heaven itself.

The Emperor has two dwarfs, both of whom are disliked by the court, although for different reasons. One dwarf is dark, humpbacked, and coarse-featured, with long unruly hair. This dwarf mocks the Emperor, imitates his gestures in a disrespectful way, contradicts his opinions, and in general plays the buffoon. Sometimes he runs among the Court ladies, brushing against them as he passes, and even, to the horror of everyone, lifting their robes and concealing himself beneath them. Nothing is more disturbing than to see a beautiful Court lady

standing with this impudent lump beneath her robe. The ladies are nevertheless forced to endure such indignities, for the Emperor has given his dwarf freedoms which no one else receives. The other dwarf is neat, aloof, and severe in feature and dress. The Emperor often discusses with him questions of philosophy, art, and warfare. This dwarf detests the dark dwarf, whom he once wounded gravely in a duel; so far as possible they avoid each other. Far from approving of the dark dwarf's rival, we are intensely jealous of his intimacy with the Emperor. If one were to ask us which dwarf is more pleasing, our unhesitating answer would be: we want them both dead.

EYELIDS

The art of illuminating the eyelid is old and honorable, and no Court lady is without her miniaturist. These delicate and precise paintings, in black, white, red, green, and blue ink, are highly prized by our courtiers, and especially by lovers, who read in them profound and ambiguous messages. One can never be certain, when one sees a handsome courtier gazing passionately into the eyes of a beautiful lady, whether he is searching for the soul behind her eyes or whether he is striving to attain a glimpse of her elegant and dangerous eyelids. These paintings are never the same, and indeed are different for each eyelid, and one cannot know, gazing across the room at a beautiful lady with whom one has not yet become intimate, whether her lowered eyelids will reveal a tall willow with dripping branches; an arched bridge in snow; a pear blossom and hummingbird; a crane among cocks; rice leaves bending in the wind; a wall with open gate, through which can be seen a distant village on a hillside. When speaking, a Court lady will lower her eyelids many times, offering tantalizing glimpses of little scenes that seem to express the elusive mystery of her soul. The lover well knows that these eyelid miniatures, at once public and intimate, half-exposed and always hiding, allude to the secret miniatures of the hidden eyes, or the eyes of the breast. These miniature masterpieces are inked upon the rosy areola surrounding the nipple and sometimes upon the sides and tip of the nipple itself. A lover disrobing his mistress in the

first ecstasy of her consent is so eager for his sight of those secret miniatures that sometimes he lingers too long in rapturous contemplation and thereby incurs severe displeasure. Some Court ladies delight in erotic miniatures of the most startling kind, and it is impossible to express the troubled excitement with which a lover, stirred to exaltation by the elegant turn of a cheekbone and the shy purity of a glance, discovers upon the breast of his beloved an exquisitely inked scene of riot and debauchery.

DRAGONS

The dragons of Cathay dwell in caves in the mountains of the North and in the depths of the Eastern sea. The dragons rarely show themselves, but we are always aware of them, for their motions are responsible for storms at sea, great waves, hurricanes, tornadoes, and earthquakes. A sea dragon rising from the waves can sink an entire fleet with one lash of its terrible tail. Sometimes a northern dragon will leave its cave and fly through the air, covering whole cities with its immense shadow. Those who have stood in the shadow of the dragon say it is accompanied by an icy wind. The tail of a dragon, glittering in the light of the sun, is said to be covered with blue and yellow scales. The head of a dragon is emerald and gold, its tongue scarlet, its eyes pits of fire. It is said that the venom which drips from its terrible jaws is hotter than boiling pitch. It is said that to see a dragon is to be changed forever. Some do not believe in dragons, because they have not seen them; it is like not believing in one's own death, because one has not yet died.

MINIATURES

Our passion for the miniature is by no means exhausted by the painting of eyelids; the art of carving in miniature is one of the oldest and most esteemed of our arts. Well-known is the Emperor's miniature palace, which sits upon a jade cabinet beside the tree with the twelve singing birds, and which is said to reproduce with absolute fidelity the vast Imperial Palace, with its thousands of chambers and corridors, as well as its innumerable courtyards, parks, and gardens. Within the miniature palace,

which is no larger than a small table, one can see, by means of a magnifying lens, myriad pieces of precise furniture, as well as entire sets of cups, bowls, and dishes, and even a pair of scissors so tiny that even when extended they can be concealed behind the leg of a fly. In the miniature throne room one can see a minute jade table with a miniature palace, and it is said that within this second palace, which can scarcely be seen by the naked eye, the artist has again reproduced the entire Imperial Palace.

SUMMER NIGHTS

On a summer night, when the moon is a white blossom in a blue garden, it is good to go out of the palace and walk in the Garden of Islands. The arched wooden bridges over their perfect reflections, the hanging willows, the white swans over the swans in the dark water, the yellow and blue lights in the palace, the smell of plum blossoms, all these speak of peace and harmony, and quell the rebellious restlessness of the soul. If, on such a night, one happens to see a dark-green frog leap into the water, sending out a rainbow of ripples that make the moon waver, one's happiness is complete.

UGLY WOMEN

It is well known that the Court ladies are the loveliest in the empire, but among them one always sees several who can only be called ugly. We are not speaking of ladies who are grotesque, monstrous, or unclean, but merely of ladies who are strikingly unpleasant to our eyes. Instead of thin, arched eyebrows they have thick, straight eyebrows, which sometimes grow together; one or more of their teeth may be noticeably crooked; their noses and mouths are too large, their eyes too wide apart or close together. Since no one can remain at the palace without the consent of the Emperor, it is clear that he considers their presence inoffensive, and perhaps even desirable. Indeed, to the embarrassment of the court, he has sometimes chosen an ugly lady for his mistress. It is a mystery that teases the understanding, for to say that the Emperor is an admirer of beauty is to speak with misleading coolness. Our



Emperor reveres beauty, lives and breathes in a world of beautiful objects, lavishes wealth and honor on the creators of beauty, is, despite his terrible omnipotence, entirely submissive to the beauty of a teacup, a plum blossom, a white cheek. The Empress is renowned for her delicate loveliness. How is it, then, that our Emperor can bear to have ugly women in his court, and appears even to encourage their presence? It is easy of course to imagine that he sometimes grows weary of the exquisitely beautiful women who meet his gaze wherever he turns. In the same way our court poets are advised to introduce occasional small dullnesses and imperfections into their verses, in order to relieve the hearer from the monotony of perfection. One can even go further, and grant that the beauty of our ladies has about it a high, noble, and spiritual quality that lifts it above the realm of the merely physical. But ugliness, by its very nature, draws attention to the physical. One might imagine, then, that the Emperor longs to escape from the spiritual beauty of our Court ladies and to abandon himself to the physical pleasures which seem to be promised by the ugly ladies—as if the coarseness and impropriety of their faces were an intimation or revelation of dark, coarse, improper pleasures hidden beneath their elegant silks. Yet it is difficult to see how this can be the true explanation, since the Emperor's longing for sensual pleasure may always be satisfied by his incomparable concubines. Another explanation remains. It is known that the Emperor is an admirer of beauty; there is no reason to assume that in this instance he has changed. Is it not possible that the Emperor sees in these ugly women a beauty to which we, with our smaller understanding, are hopelessly blind? Our poets have said that there can be no beauty without strangeness. One imagines our Emperor returning to his chamber from the stimulation of his concubines. From these unimaginably desirable women, those masterpieces of the art of appearance, who express in every feature of face and body the physical loveliness he has craved, he is returning to a world of Court ladies, themselves flowers of beauty who in some turn of the lip, some glance, some look of sweet pensiveness may even surpass the wholly sensual beauty of his concubines. As he passes through the corridors leading to the East Wing, he comes

upon a lady and her maids. The lady has thick, straight eyebrows that nearly grow together; her nose is broad; she gives a clumsy curtsy. The ugly eyebrows, the broad nose, the clumsy gestures irritate his dulled senses into attention, and many days later, when he has passed long hours among his concubines and lovely ladies, he will suddenly recall, with a burst of excitement, those thick eyebrows, that broad nose, that clumsy curtsy, for like a beautiful woman suddenly glimpsed behind a lattice-window she will lead his soul away from the torpor of the familiar into a dark realm of strangeness and wonder.

ISLANDS

The floating islands of Cathay are most commonly found in our lakes, especially the great southern lakes, but they occur in our rivers as well. Nothing is more delightful, for a group of Court ladies walking by a pleasant riverside, than to see one of these islands floating by. The younger ladies, little more than girls, laugh and cry out, and even older and more sober women can scarcely suppress their joy. It is quite different when these same ladies are in a boat on the water, for then the island, whose motions are entirely unpredictable, is an object of great terror. Except for their motion, these islands are like ordinary islands, and the question of their origin has never been answered. Our ancient historians classified floating islands with water-animals, but we are less certain. Some believe that floating islands are a special race of islands, which reproduce and which have no relation whatever to common islands. Others believe that floating islands are common islands that have broken away; animated by boredom, melancholy, and restlessness, they follow no certain path, bringing with them the joy of surprise and the pain of the unknown.

MIRRORS

The ladies of Cathay, and above all the Court ladies, have for their mirrors a passion so intense that a lover feels he can never inspire such ardors of uninterrupted attention. The mirror of a lady holds her with its powerful and irresistible gaze, desires

inhabitants of this wing were descendants of the Emperor's great-grandfather; living for four generations in this unfrequented part of the palace, they had kept to the old ways, and the old pronunciation. Shaken, the Emperor rode away, and in the ensuing nights paid many visits to his concubines.

BLUE HORSES

The Emperor's blue horses in a field of white snow.

SORROW

The Twelve Images of Sorrow are: the autumn moon behind three black branches, a mirror when it does not reflect a face, a single white plum petal hanging from a bough, the eyes of a beautiful lady at dusk, a garden in summer rain, frosty breath on an autumn night, an old man gazing at a river, a faded fan, a dead sparrow in the snow, a lover leaving his mistress at dawn, an old abandoned hour-glass, the black form of the wild duck against the red setting sun. These are the sorrows known to all men, but there is a sorrow that is only of Cathay. Our sorrow is the sorrow hidden in the depths of rich, deep-blue summer afternoons, the sorrow of sunshin on the blossoming plum tree, the sorrow that lies like a faint purple shadow in the iris of a beautiful, laughing girl.

THE MAN IN A MAZE

It sometimes happens that a child's toy, newly invented by one of the sublime toymakers of Cathay, enchants our Emperor. The toy is at once taken up by his courtiers, and for days or weeks or even months at a time the entire court is in a fever over that toy, which suddenly drops into disfavor and soon passes out of existence altogether. One such toy that took the fancy of the Emperor was a small closed ivory box, of a size easily held in the hand. The inside of the box was composed of many partitions, forming a maze. The partitions were invisible but were shown by black lines on the outside of the box. The tiny, invisible ball, which was of gold, was called The Man in a Maze. One would

her to be wholly his, and in the privacy of the night encourages disrobings. What torture for the yearning and neglected lover to imagine his lady at night in her chamber, alone with her amorous mirror. He imagines the mirror's passionate and hungry gaze, which holds her spellbound; the long, searching look, deep into her treacherous eyes; her slow surrender to the act of reflection. The mirror, having drawn the lady into his silver depths, begins to yearn for still greater intimacies. Once in the glass, she begins to feel an inner tickling; she feels about to swoon; her eyes, half-closed, have a veiled and drowsy look; and all at once, yielding to her mirror's imperious need, she slips from her robe, and boldly gives her nakedness to the glass. And perhaps, when she turns her back to her mirror, in preparation for peering slyly over her shoulder, for a moment she hesitates, permitting herself to be seen and savored by the insatiable glass, feeling her skin tingle in that stern, lecherous, unsparring gaze. Is it surprising that her lover, meeting her the next morning, sees that she is pale and somewhat tired, not yet recovered from the excesses of the night?

YEARNING

There are fifty-four Steps of Love, of which the fifth is Yearning. There are seventeen degrees of yearning, through all of which the lover must pass before reaching the Sixth Step, which is Restlessness.

THE PALACE

The palace of the Emperor is so vast that a man cannot pass through all its chambers in a lifetime. Whole portions of the palace are neglected and abandoned, and begin to lead a strange, independent existence. It is told how the Emperor, riding alone one day in one of the southeastern gardens, dismounted and entered a wing of the palace through an open window. He had never seen the chambers of this wing before; their decorations had for him an inexpressible and faintly troubling charm. Coming upon an old man, dressed in old-fashioned ceremonial robes, he asked a question; the man replied in an accent which the Emperor had never heard. In time the Emperor discovered that the



CATHAY



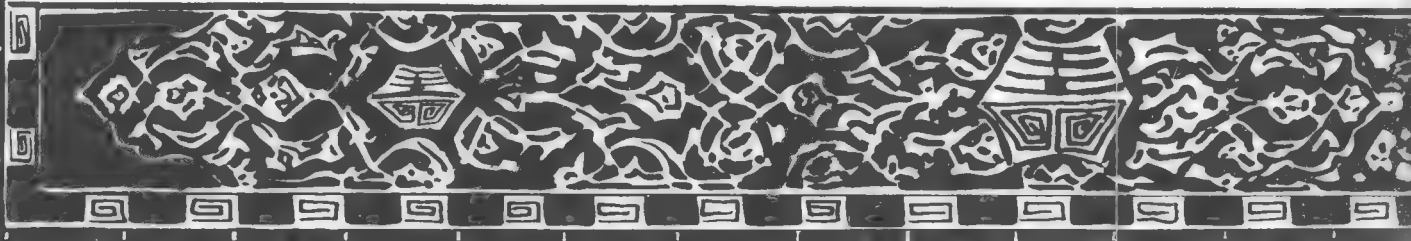
often see the Emperor standing alone by a window, his head bowed gravely over the little toy that he held in the palm of his hand.

BARBARIANS

Often there is talk of the barbarians who press upon us at the outermost limits of the empire. Although our armies are invincible, our fortifications impregnable, our mountains impassable, and our forests impenetrable, our women shudder and look about with uneasy eyes. Sometimes a forbidden thought comes: to be a barbarian, to sit upon a black horse with flaming nostrils and hooves of thunder, to ride swifter than fire with one's long hair streaming in the wind.

THE CONTEST OF MAGICIANS

In the shimmering and legendary past of Cathay, when history and fable were often confounded, an Emperor is said to have held a contest of magicians. From all four quarters of the empire the magicians flocked to the Imperial Palace, to perform in the throne room and seek to be chosen as Court Magician. In those days the art of magic was taken far more seriously than it is today, and scarcely a boy in the empire but could turn a peach blossom into a dove. The Emperor, seated high on his throne in the presence of his most powerful courtiers and his most beautiful Court ladies, permitted each magician only a single trick, after which the magician was informed, by means of a folded note brought to him on a silver tray outside the doors of the throne room, whether he was to depart or stay. Those chosen to remain were lodged in elegant chambers, and later were asked to perform a second time before the Emperor, although on this occasion the performance took place in the presence of two rival magicians. Since two of the three magicians were destined to be dismissed, there was a strong air of drama about this stage of the contest, and it is said that the magicians continually sought to bribe the courtiers and Court ladies, all of whom, however, remained incorruptible. Some magicians wished to be the first of the three to perform, others longed to be second, and still others believed that the advan-



tage lay with him who was third, and many arguments raged on all three sides of the question—quite in vain, since the order was decided by lot, the rice-leaves being drawn by the Empress herself. The one hundred twenty-eight magicians remaining after this stage of the battle were now requested to perform in pairs; and in this manner the magicians were gradually reduced to sixty-four, and to thirty-two, and to sixteen, and to eight, and to four, and at last to only two. When there were only two magicians left, one of whom was a vigorous man of ripe years, and the other an old man with a white beard, there was a pause for one week, during which the court prepared for the final match, while the magicians were permitted to rest or practice, as they pleased. At last the great day came, the lots were drawn, and the younger man was chosen to perform first. He had astonished everyone with the daring and elegance of his earlier performances, and a hush came over the court as he climbed the carpeted steps of the handsome ebony and ivory platform constructed for the magicians by the Emperor's own carpenter. The magician bowed, and announced that he had a request. He asked a member of the court to bring to him, there on his platform, the statue of a beautiful woman. He himself would gladly bring a jade or marble statue out of the ends of his fingers, but he asked for a statue to be brought to him so that there could be no question concerning the true nature of the statue. This unusual request produced murmurs of uncertainty, but at last it was decided to humor his whim; and six strong courtiers were dispatched to fetch from the Emperor's collection the statue of a beautiful jade statue stood upon the ebony and ivory platform. The magician moved his hands before the stone woman, and as the court watched in awe, the statue slowly began to wake. The jade body turned to flesh, the jade lips to red lips, the jade hair to shiny black hair; and a beautiful living girl stood on the platform, looking about in bewilderment. The magician at once robed her, and led her forth among the astonished court; she spoke, and laughed, and in every way was a real, live girl. So awestruck were the courtiers, who had never seen any trick like it before, that they almost forgot the second magician, who sat to one side and waited. After a while the at-

ention of the court returned to the neglected magician, about whom they were now curious, for no one could imagine a more brilliant trick than the godlike deed of breathing life into inanimate matter. The old magician, who was by no means feeble, took his place on the platform, and to the surprise of all present he praised his rival, saying that in all his years of devotion to the noble art of magic he had seen nothing to equal such a deed. For certainly it was wonderful to bring life out of stone, just as in the ancient fables. He hoped, too, that a woman of such high beauty would not frown upon the praises of an old magician. At this the newly created woman smiled, and looked all the more beautiful. The old magician then bowed, and said that he too had a request: he would like the six courtiers to bring him the statue of a beautiful woman. The court was surprised at the old magician's request, for even if he had mastered the art of bringing forth a live woman from the stone, his deed could only equal that of his rival, without surpassing it; and by virtue of being second, he would seem only an imitator, without daring or originality. Meanwhile the six courtiers fetched a second jade statue, and placed it upon the ebony and ivory platform. In beauty the second statue rivaled the first, and young courtiers crowded close to the platform, eagerly awaiting her transformation. The old magician waved his hands before the stone, and slowly it began to wake. The jade arms moved, the jade lips parted, the jade eyes blinked and looked about; and a beautiful jade girl stood on the platform, smiling and crossing her smooth jade arms. The magician led her forth among the marveling courtiers, who reached out to touch her green arms and her green hair; and some said her arms were jade, yet warm, and some said her arms were flesh, but stony cold. All crowded around her, staring and wondering; and the old magician led her up to the Emperor. His Imperial Majesty said that although there were many beautiful women in his court, there was but one breathing statue; and without hesitation he awarded the prize to the old magician. It is said that the first woman grew ill-tempered at the attention showered upon her rival, and that the first task of the new Court Magician was to change her back into a beautiful statue. 17

SHUFFLING BLUES

by T.M. SWAIN



IT WAS A VERY SPECIAL HOSPITAL—
AND 'MAKING THE ROUNDS' HAD A VERY SPECIAL MEANING.

"Time to die, prole," Thomas shrieks from the tv room. "Time for all homo proles to die." Kicking furniture and throwing cushions, he's less out of control than he'd have me believe. If he were truly beyond reason, he'd say to hell with the consequences and kick in the television screen or bring out the shiv he bought yesterday from a guy in unit twelve.

I'm fairly sure about this.

And so certain am I that our attendant is hunched over his desk chain-smoking and writing a report on this morning's violent incident between Thomas and Leonard, I don't even peek in the office window. From experience I know he has one eye on the clock and can hardly wait the thirty-five minutes until the four o'clock shift change frees him for sixteen hours; but nobody, and I mean *nobody* these days, wants to be liable for what goes down, and his desire to shed responsibility is to some degree his own tough shit.

With a brief hesitation to review my plan and calm down, I kick open the door, stomp across the carpet, and, sighing loudly as I fling myself around, drop into the chair in the corner. Seated at the desk, his back to me, Matthew releases a stream of cigarette smoke and continues to write; so I pick up the phone and slam it down, lift and slam it down again, and, because he still refuses to turn and acknowledge my presence, reach under the chair and snap the lamp cord from its socket.

"Plug it in," he snaps, his voice barely controlled. "Plug it back in and get out of here. I'm tired, and I have this report to finish. Can't whatever it is wait until four o'clock?"

Well, everyone in here wants to be out of here, but the outside is merely another form of *inside*, so I try to concern myself with practicalities. Matthew is a c-5 middle class on temporary transfer from the Sector-24 Office of Bureaucratic Guidelines and Structuring and fails to keep secret his resent-

SHUFFLING BLUES

ment at working and dealing with schizos, m/d's, and assorted psychotics. *One hell of a job*, I've heard him tell the supervisor with his characteristic tone of contempt and frustration, and God knows I empathize; but right now I need his help, so I tell him, "Nope."

I hear him slam down his pen, and his chair squeals as he turns to face me in the dark. "Plug in the lamp," he repeats, "or I'll write you up, and second shift will give you early bed."

I reach down and fumble the prongs into the socket; but even as the lamp comes on, he glances at the clock and swivels back to the damned report, so I begin to bang my head against the wall. He tries to appear so composed and objective, but I know how to force his attention and have been, as a matter of fact, merely biding my time and allowing him the chance to attend my needs without coercion.

I bang my head five, maybe six times before he gives in. He pushes back his chair, grinds out his cigarette oh so slowly as if to assure me—and himself—he's in absolute control, and turns to ask, "Okay, Albert, what's important enough to injure yourself over?"

"Oh, lots of things." Already I'm dizzy, and my stomach aches with nausea, but I continue banging.

His face is suddenly flushed. "Stop it," he demands with a little grunt of frustration and lurches forward to grasp my shoulders and force me away from the wall. "What do you want?"

"Screw you," I say. "I'm not so sure I want to tell you now."

Matthew settles back in his chair. He leans forward and pats my knee and says, surprisingly gently, "Albert, is it another problem with—?"

Turned toward me and at right angles to the door, he doesn't notice Thomas poke his head around the corner, pretend to launch a wad of spit at me, then duck away.

With a cloyingly sweet tone, I say, "Fuck you, fuck you, fuck you." This is all so obvious: the moment I admit, *Well, yes, Thomas is after me again, and I'm scared to death and would like to stay here in the office at least until four*, he'll send me with empty assurances into the living area to get my butt kicked, so I explain to him—

Quite earnestly, I tell him—

—Well, screwing up my face in a way he hates but can never ignore, I repeat, "Fuck you, Matthew, you creep."

"Okay, you've got early bed. I can't pass out the meds until four, so why don't you avoid getting in more trouble and go watch tv?"

"You know what's the matter," I say, and then spill everything as my eyes fill with tears. "Thomas is saying that because he's a c-23 middle and I'm a c-12 lower class, he's better than me and wants to beat me up again to prove it." My voice is choked, I

sob convulsively and squirm in my chair, and this is, as always, so embarrassing. "You have to pass out the meds now or let me stay until four."

"You seem to be confused about who's in charge, Albert," he says. "I don't *have* to do anything."

"Yes you do," I say over my shoulder as I lean down to find the lamp cord. "It's your job, it's your responsibility."

"—Time to die, Albert, time to die," Thomas screams from outside the office.

As he closes the door, Matthew sneaks a glance at the clock. "Let's talk about this, Albert, and try to make it twenty-five minutes without an incident," he says. "Now you and I both understand that you antagonize your peers because it's the simplest and surest form of interaction you know, and we agree that running to staff for rescue makes you feel secure, right?"

I say nothing, not a damned word. With Thomas lurking outside waiting to bloody my nose, or worse, this is correct but beside the point. Matthew tends to state only the obvious, but then again, I'm grateful for even the most limited understanding.

"Right?" he repeats.

I nod and say, "But listen. Listen and don't just worry about getting this in my record or about remembering to pass it on to the supervisor." To conceal its sudden quiver, I thrust my left hand under my thigh and say, rather ponderously, "I have this feeling that out in the corridors I held or actually *hold* a position of some decision-making power that somehow accounts for Thomas's hating me."

Matthew shakes his head slowly. "Delusions, Albert," he says, as if reading off the wall. "You suffer from delusions. You should work to eliminate rather than justify your problem with peer interaction. I mean, that's a step toward getting out of here."

"Maybe, yeah . . . *maybe*, but I have this terrible feeling that I've made decisions I can't bear to live with." This strikes me as a major insight, and I whisper to myself more than Matthew (who, in any case, refuses to be bothered), "I'm not even sure I want to get out of here."

Matthew seems always to be guarding some deep secret. He appears for a moment to consider and looks away as our eyes meet. "Delusions," he says.

"Yeah. Yeah, I suppose. I need . . . why don't you pass out the meds?"

"At four, not before. Your system is awash with chemicals, Albert, and advancing the med schedule even a few minutes could be dangerous. I can't pass out the pills whenever you or I feel that—"

I could have warned him, really I could have. The door hurls open and slams off the wall, and

SHUFFLING BLUES

Thomas blocks it with a forearm. I spring from my chair and stumble over Matthew's outstretched legs to crouch in the corner.

Thomas stands in the doorway gritting his teeth, growling, and as is also his habit when agitated, rubbing his hands as if trying to scour them clean. "What's the little faggot saying about me?" he asks Matthew. "What are you saying, Albert?"

"Now wait a minute," says Matthew, placing a hand on Thomas's chest.

Thomas knocks aside his arm and howls, *howls* with such rage that my stomach tightens and spasms. He leaps forward but, due probably to medication-impaired reflexes, steps on Matthew's ankle and falls forward. As both grunt in pain, Matthew, thank God, grasps Thomas from behind and pulls my attacker's wrists to his sides in the safe and committee-approved manner.

His face pressed sideways to the seat of the chair, Matthew's face pressed to the nape of his neck, Thomas spits bloody saliva and murmurs, "I was just kidding. Let me go, you asshole."

Careful to keep out of reach in case Thomas slips loose a sweaty wrist, I squat and tell Matthew, "You should have passed out the meds." Because I understand more about creating alliances than Matthew realizes, I add, "Hey, don't hurt Thomas, you jerk."

Matthew inhales deeply to ease his panting. "Call Lyons," he says.

"Class war," I call out. "Matthew's hurting Thomas, Matthew's hurting Thomas."

Leonard and Gerald and several other patients who are aware of activity outside their own imaginations have gathered at the door to point and giggle and urge Thomas to break free and kick Matthew's ass; so it's disappointing that, despite this encouragement, Thomas merely lifts his head, blows sweat from his upper lip, and says to me, "You heard him, faggot. Call the damned supervisor."

I move cautiously around them to the phone and ring the emergency number.

Thomas sinks his teeth into Matthew's wrist. Matthew jabs a thumb into the mass of ganglia at the base of Thomas's jaw and, when Supervisor Lyons arrives at three-fifty, continues to press long after Thomas has released his bite to murmur, "Okay, damn it, okay, okay," and moan like an hysterical corridor rat.

"—Matthew," Lyons says sharply as he forces patients aside and comes into the office, "Matthew, that's enough. What happened?"

I lean comfortably against the wall, hands in pockets. "Nothing would have happened if he'd given us our meds, right, Thomas?"

"Fuck you," snaps Thomas.

"Okay." Lyons steps around and Matthew and Thomas, unlocks the metal cabinet beside the desk,

and pulls out the middle drawer. He takes out and opens two vials and lays the meds on the desk. "Okay," he repeats, and when he looks questioningly at me, I grin and nod.

He tosses me my four o'clock dose of God knows what, and I gulp it down.

As usual, Thomas resists, forcing himself to gag and pressing his mouth into his shoulder, so I kneel and steady his head while Matthew thumbs the spot below his ear and Lyons shoves the capsule between his teeth.

"Swallow it or we'll give you a shot," Matthew says, and Thomas obeys.

The speed with which the meds take effect and modify behavior is always startling. Within minutes, my fears are ended, and all is pretty much A-OK. Lyons scolds Matthew for his lack of responsibility in allowing the incident to escalate; Thomas stands calmly in the doorway wiping sweat and saliva from his face and spitting blood into his palm; and I settle in at the desk to light a cigarette and think things over. Then I pull out the top drawer and sift through the papers to find a blank incident-report form.

Matthew sorts and passes out the other patients' meds and, glancing my way with a little grin of victory, swallows his own at precisely four. "You know," he says, examining with one finger the blood-specked oval on his wrist, "I sometimes have the funny feeling that this is more a recreation and recovery area than a shelter for the emotionally disturbed, and that I don't so much work here as ..." and his voice trails off into confused contemplation.

This isn't particularly odd for one in the midst of a shift change, but I must be careful not to ruin his next sixteen hours. "Delusions are one aspect of your problem," I say with no suggestion of empathy or enthusiasm.

Ignoring this, he says, "Yeah, I don't so much, uh ..."

"Well, I ..."

"... Well, I certainly live here," he says with a small, burbling laugh and much wringing of hands, "and even though I know you don't give a damn what happens, I thought I'd warn you that I've had enough of that little queer Leonard, and I'm gonna have to kick his ass before this shift is over."

Well. Leonard is quite likely hiding somewhere; Lyons, having spent eight hours working, has taken his meds and slipped into his room to nap; and Thomas has reminded me of the emergency number, given me a shiv he found in one of the patient's bedrooms, and gone off to supervise.

I have my doubts about all this myself, that's for sure; and these doubts together with the dread of eight hours of responsibility synthesize to make me oblivious to Matthew's threats. "Why don't you," I suggest in the spirit of getting him the hell out of my hair, "go watch tv or something?" 17



THE NIGHT LISTENER

HE KNEW THAT THE INTRUDER WOULD COME FOR THEM TONIGHT.
BUT HE WOULD BE READY FOR IT.

by Chet Williamson

I begin to be aware of the sounds of night when my wife buys the electric blanket. Oh, there have been other sounds before—the hushed roar of the furnace, the weary hum of late-night cars passing on the road at the bottom of the yard, the whir of the refrigerator—but the electric blanket is what opens my ears to the night and makes me *hear*, makes me aware of what is waiting in the dark, what is stirring just outside, unheard by those who welcome sleep, shrouding themselves under covers, closing themselves off to the warnings.

It is that premeditated, deliberate *click* of the thermostat, as if a black finger had come down on a

metal button, that keeps me on my back, eyes opened wide, fixed on the single red eye of my individual control on the headboard. The light for my wife's side hovers over her sleeping head, bathing her hair in a crimson glow, and I think these two lights are like the piggyish eyes of a monster whose head is as big as the bed, who could swallow us up, covers, mattress, box spring and all, before moving to the next house.

A fancy, that, and one at which I am quickly able to smile. But that steady clicking continues. Every few minutes I hear it, and it brings me back from the half-sleep I have entered. I remember then

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the books I have read as a boy, in which Tarzan awakes from sleep to a sharp alertness, with none of the slow drifting up that civilized man experiences, no dull druglike flicking of eyelids, jarring from the light, none of that. It was once necessary to survival to awaken quickly, like an animal. It may be necessary still.

I practice with the blanket.

Click. I awake, alert, eyes wide, pupils huge, struggling to make light from darkness. There is nothing. I allow myself to sleep again.

Click. Again I awake, muscles tensed, ready to spring up, to move right or left. My wife sleeps through it all.

That is how I spend the night—awake, asleep, awake, asleep, over and over again, like a Pavlovian dog trained for insomnia. The next morning it is strange, but I feel rested, even vital. I consider having my wife return the blanket, but decide not to. There is something deeper here, something beyond switched-on switched-off night. There is a reason for me to spend the night on sleep's fine edge. Soon I learn what it is.

It is outside. I hear it several nights later, rustling the bushes by the bedroom windows. At first I think it is the wind, and I listen for the rapping of the yew limb on the roof overhang, but it never comes. So I listen more intently, not fading into sleep after the blanket's most recent *click* as I usually do, and I hear it moving around the outside of the house, passing and pausing at the front door, sliding around toward the backyard, stopping at the back door, and then moving on. And somehow I know that it will not enter tonight, nor perhaps ever. It will pass by, and I will wait for its return. I will be alert, and will wake from my surface sleep to meet its coming.

I go to the next room where my young son lies sleeping, his door ajar. Through the crack I listen for his light, shallow breath. There is silence. I strain to the uttermost, but still cannot hear him, so I push the door open slowly, lifting up on it to keep the bottom from rubbing on the carpet and making a noise to wake him. He has thrown the covers back in his nocturnal tossings. Leaning over him, I listen on *pointe* for the sweet small breaths whistling in and out. I hear them now and touch the warmth of his cheek, allowing my index finger to slip beneath his tiny nose where I feel the light puffs of lung-heated air. A kiss on the cheek, and I straighten up, tucking the quilts and blankets under his shoulders so that his own weight holds them on securely. Then I look about the room in the weak yellow glow of the night-light.

The curtains are drawn, the windows closed against the bitter cold. The furnace is running, and the hot air makes the curtains above the heat duct billow outward, as if someone is standing behind them three feet above the floor. Finally the furnace

stops, the shape becomes a curtain once more, and the house falls silent. I listen, but there is nothing, and I leave the room and go back to bed where my wife sleeps soundly. And well she may, for I am awake to listen.

More weeks pass, and I hear it once nearly every night now. I stay awake until the sound of its shambling through the winter-dry grass assails my ears, and then, naked, I rise silently from the bed and follow it as it moves around the outside of the house, the two of us like the plastic Scottie dogs whose feet are magnets, so where one moves on one side of a thin plane, the other moves as well.

Past the drawn curtains of the living room we go, through the dining room out to the kitchen, pausing at the double-locked back door. If I pull the sheer curtains back I may see it just outside, its face pressed against the cold brittleness of the storm-door pane.

Then I hear it move away. A loose stone rattles on concrete as it crosses the drive, a bone-dry leaf cracks in the grass at its passing, and the weeds in the field snap like kindling. The night is silent again. I visit my son's room to cover him, and return to my bed. My skin is mottled with goose-prickles, and I slide toward my wife to steal her warmth. She shivers in some secret dream as my coldness attacks her, but only for a moment, and then she burrows closer, the unselfish sacrifice that love demands ruling her even in sleep. In a minute I am warm, and I think of how much I love her and the boy. With that thought embracing me, I allow myself to sleep just a breath from waking. It has never come back twice in one night, but that does not mean it never will. As long as I remember this, they will both be safe.

Two weeks later it leaves and returns in the same night, and I know that the confrontation is drawing near. It comes again some time after I return to my bed, how long I cannot say since the night devours time. There is a rubbing noise that makes ripples in the pond of sleep, and my head, just below the surface, breaks water and I wake. I know it has returned, for I hear its sound of passage, a sound I know as well as my dear wife's gentle breathing. And there is another thing now.

There is a smell to it, light yet unmistakable. I do not know when I first noticed it, and I suppose it came upon me little by little as one grows aware of a dull ache. It smells like flowers. Not the pleasing scent of fresh-cut blooms, but of flowers just past their prime, just when the edges of the petals start to curl and discolor, and the thought that soon they must be discarded diminishes the looker's joy. It is the scent of shadowy death crossing life's border.

I smell it now: not the lingering wisps of odor left by its first visit, but the full aroma of its presence. It is directly outside the window next to our bed, and it makes a thin scrabbling sound as if

**From beyond
the door
I hear
a low laugh,
and I realize that,
as I feel its power,
it tastes my fear.**

tapping at the sash with spindly nails. I throw off the covers, put my feet on the chilly floor, and rise as furtively as a wraith, so that the bedframe makes no creak to disturb my wife's slumber.

On it moves, pausing more frequently than on its first visit. At the living room window on the shadow side of the house it stands for a very long time, and when I finally decide to time it I count eight hundred and thirty ticks of the mantel clock's pendulum before it moves on, rushing past the kitchen and bathroom, and circling its way to my son's room where it waits outside the curtained window so long that I grow tired and sit beside the crib, my back to the wall. But I become uncomfortable facing away from it, even though thick brick and plaster lie between us. So I turn and sit Indian fashion, staring at the wall.

Then suddenly it moves with wind-swiftness around to the back of the house again, and I must spring up and run so as not to lose it. When I enter the kitchen I feel certain of its presence. It is at the back door again, and I hear the rattle of metal against metal as its cold fingers fondle the handle of the storm door and its thumb caresses the button. I know the door is locked. I locked it myself before I went to bed.

Then why does a soft click, like a disengaged latch, whisper in the kitchen's silence? And why is there a squeak like a thin scream in the night, as the storm door slowly angles outward, letting the wind press against the wood and glass of the inner door?

I reach out and touch the doorknob. The latch is set. My hand moves up to the bolt and finds it secure. And then, before I can stop myself, I pull the curtain back and look through the window.

There is nothing. Nothing but the storm door held open by an unseen hand that now releases it to drift closed on its hydraulic spring. Then the holder of that door retreats into the night, and its sound recedes more swiftly than ever before.

It returns every night now, and I am growing weary. I cannot trust myself to descend too far into sleep for fear that I will miss its second coming, and even then how can I be sure it will not pay a third visit? I cannot help but feel that when it comes three times in one night, I shall finally see it and fight it.

Something in me thrills at that thought. It is becoming increasingly difficult not to fling the doors and windows open and attempt to fall upon it with all my strength.

But I control myself. When the conflict comes it will be of *its* making. Its intrusion upon my house, my domain, will trigger our clash. I pray that it comes soon. I thirst for it as I thirst for the deep deathlike sleep that may no longer be mine in this life.

So it comes again this night, and on its second visitation we stand, thin door between, while wind blasts against the house like a fist with uncounted knuckles that burrow into every crevice. Its smell is strong, and my ears are filled with the *sound* of it, even through the roar of rushing air. Then something new occurs.

I feel a force that passes through the door as though the wood were butter and wraps itself around my bare skin. And for the first time I know the overwhelming strength of it, and the strength of the fear it inspires, and I tremble as though I were standing outside, my nakedness exposed to the freezing winds. From beyond the door I hear a low laugh, and I realize that, as I feel its power, it tastes my fear. Then it turns and moves away over the yard to the field, and its power goes with it, melting away my fear like ice under the sun, leaving a grey puddle in my mind to mark its memory.

It will return. Now I am sure of it. There is no reason for it to wait any longer.

I go to my bedroom and check the window locks, then leave, closing the door behind me. In my son's room I rattle the levers, making sure the screws in the window frame are tight. I cover his shoulders with the blankets, kiss him, and shut his door securely.

I think the sword will do. It hangs on the wall of the den next to the large bookcase, nailed there years ago in a moment of gothic romanticism, and I have been half embarrassed by it ever since. But now I am grateful for my unintended foresight as my fingers wrap around the hilt in the dark and I slide it from its scabbard. It makes an abrasive noise as it leaves its longtime home, and I let my hand slip down the length of its blade. There are small rough patches I take to be rust, and the edges are so dull that I can easily rub the heel of my hand over them without pain. But the point is still sharp, and a quick firm thrust should pierce anything possessing the softness of life.

I go into the living room where I sit waiting

THE NIGHT LISTENER

on the sofa, the sword between my knees, my hands on the hilt, the point against the carpet. Finally I hear it, and its boldness frightens me for a moment. There is none of its previous stealth in its tread; the weeds and sticks and grass beneath it cry out at its passing where before they would only have whimpered. There is no fear in it.

The front door trembles and holds. The lock is on, and it does not break the glass. Now around to the back it comes, passing the living room and den windows with a steady imperious tread. I know that tonight it will enter.

My stomach twists as I pad into the kitchen, the blade angled weakly toward the floor, no d'Arctagnan gaily swinging a beribboned rapier, but a naked primal man, guarding his cave against the beast that seeks entry.

The screen-door handle rattles, and outside I see it in its multifarious shapes—sabertooth, lamia, ghoul—the night-horror standing outside the door. Even if I die, I will finally see its face; despite the dark, despite the speed with which it may come, like a juggernaut, upon me, I will see its true face.

The storm door opens, thrown back with no thought of secretiveness, and now the thing's hand grasps the cool roundness of the second knob. It turns a hair and stops. It is locked, as always. I have locked it. The thing pauses, and in that second I detect an unease, a thought of turning around and walking back into the darkness.

But no! No more of this! And my left hand reaches out and quietly turns the catch on the knob, unlocking the door so that even a cripple might enter.

Try again! I think savagely. Please, damn you, try again!

It does. The knob turns, the latch leaves the security of its hole and draws into the door itself. The way stands open for a push. I step back and ready the sword. When it comes through it will be huge, larger than man, so I lift my arm back and high. If I aim high, perhaps I may reach its heart.

The door opens. Against the outer dark I see a deeper darkness that fills the doorway. I wait only until the door is opened wide, until the rubber stop thuds against the wall, and then I thrust with all my strength, blade rocketing forward like a javelin.

It stops as though a fist has grabbed it, and at first I fear that is precisely what has happened. But as the shock of impact shivers up my arm, it is followed by a *yielding* feeling, a vulnerability that amazes me. The sword's point is pulled downward and the hilt falls from my hand as the thing strikes the floor with a solidity that shakes the kitchen, rattles the silverware. Then comes the sound of its dying. My hand fumbles at the wall, and the light switch I have touched a thousand times seems cold and alien. I take a deep breath, flick the white plastic toggle, and light floods the room.

He is a boy. He is nothing but a boy. Ecto-

morphically thin, he lies there, his arms protruding from the short cuffs of his jacket like fleshy sticks. A fuzz of wheat-colored beard covers his chin, though it is hard to detect because of the blood. Gloved hands grasp the sword still sticking in his throat, where the jaw waggles to and fro. But no words come, only a wet whistling that sends red froth bubbling up from the edges of the wound. His neck, the front of his jacket, the throw rug beneath him are all sodden with blood. He turns his eyes toward me, and I am struck by how young he is. His dripping gloves tap at the sword blade, and I kneel beside him and draw it out of his sundered flesh. Huge gouts of blood follow the blade, and what seems a river of the stuff runs from the ragged hole I have made. I drop the sword and grab the tired rug from beneath him, pressing it over the wound. The pressure of my hands makes it ooze like a sponge, but I hold it there for what can be no more than a few seconds.

Then I look at the boy's eyes and I stop. My hands release their grip on the impromptu bandage, and a final drowning breath whispers redly away as the eyes glaze over.

I hear someone call my name and look up to see my wife standing in the doorway. From her position she can see only me and the lower half of the child's body, his dungarees and white sneakers with red and blue stripes. She stands there and I look at her and mumble something about a burglar, I've killed a burglar, and she disappears into the darkness of the house. When she returns she is carrying my bathrobe. She comes into the kitchen where she can see the body fully and holds out the robe for me. I put it on apologetically, thinking that the blood will stain it, but she appears indifferent to that. Then I call the police and an ambulance, though it is far too late.

The police tell me that there have been several burglaries in the past few weeks, and that there should be no legal complications because of the law that permits the use of what they call deadly force to repel intruders. I learn later that the boy was sixteen. I try to apologize to his parents at the courthouse, but they will not speak to me. The father's face is sad and stony, and his wife cries silently.

It was so wrong. Such an unfortunate coincidence that the boy came that night, that I mistook him for what I truly sought to kill. Perhaps it sent the child as a scapegoat, thinking his death would satisfy me, put me off my guard. But I am not fooled. It should know I am a wiser, more fitting adversary than that. My sleep is always light, and often I arise and walk to the windows and doors, listening for its coming. It will not find me unaware. I will be ready when it comes.

But it has been a long time, now, a very long time. And I have not heard it return.

Not once, in all these long, cold nights. 17

FIRESTARTER

Turning the Heat on the Hit-Men

by Lorenzo Carcaterra

STEPHEN KING'S HOTTEST NOVEL COMES TO THE SCREEN IN A THRILLER ABOUT PARAPSYCHOLOGY, PYROTECHNICS, AND POLITICS.

It only takes a thought—a brief signal flashed across the mind's eye. Then a frown, a curl of the brow, a deep-set, glazed-over look ... and the deed is done. Fire, destruction, pain, death—these are the inevitable results.

At the core of this devastation rests a pretty, sweet-natured, eight-year-old girl named Charlene McGee, Charlie to her few friends and dwindling family. Little Charlie, hair the color of old straw, can start fires, large or small, with a simple nudge of her will. And as her determination grows stronger and her skill improves, the flames become hotter, unstoppable, engulfing all in their path.

Charlie's awesome powers derive from a government-funded drug experiment her parents participated in while they were college students. But in another sense they are born of the fast mind and pen of Stephen King, whose 1980 thriller *Firestarter* was, as expected, a huge bestseller in both hardcover and paperback versions. The success of the book, combined



with King's unique abilities to harness his horrific talents into mountains of millions, intrigued producer Dino DeLaurentiis, himself no stranger to the sweet scent of money.

DeLaurentiis, as is his style, thought big. He opened his wallet, let a few million drop out, assembled a cast and an incredible special effects crew in North Carolina and, along with director Mark Lester (*Stunts, Class of 1984*), set about filming his heat-and-heart-wrenching tale. The cast is what the public relations people like to describe as "stellar." George C. Scott, in what may be his best role since he took on both the German and American armies in *Patton*, is John Rainbird, a one-eyed Indian assassin employed by a sinister government agency called the Department of Scientific Intelligence, but commonly known as "the Shop." It was the Shop that funded the initial drug experiments; it is the Shop that now wants little Charlie killed. Rainbird has his own dark reasons for stalking her: he seeks to know death through the little girl's dying eyes. Charlie is played by Drew Barrymore, the little sister in *E.T.*, who here must combine an air of innocence with a taste for death and destruction.



Drew Barrymore (top), as an eight-year-old paranormal, and George C. Scott, as a one-eyed government hit-man, are *Firestarter*'s unlikely adversaries.

FIRESTARTER

Then there's David Keith as Andy McGee, the father of the fire-making child, a man whose only crime was to be in need of money once and foolish enough to believe that a college laboratory was a place to earn it. Martin Sheen, who appeared in last year's film of King's *Dead Zone*, plays Cap, genial head of the Shop, in a role originally slated for Burt Lancaster, who bowed out because of recent surgery. Art Carney, Heather Locklear, and Louise Fletcher round out what adds up to a formidable cast.

Yet these are not the only stars of *Firestarter*, and the film's success does not depend entirely on their talents. That distinction also belongs to two gentlemen named Mike Wood and Jeff Jarvis, special effects wizards and the ones who, with pyrotechnician Glenn Randall, put the Fire in *Firestarter*. "We had to set fires that engulf an entire mansion in thirty minutes," says Wood, nominated for an Academy Award for his work on *Poltergeist*. "We had large fireballs that would shoot through the air. There was fire everywhere I turned. It went beyond anything I've ever done before."

When playing with fire, there are literally hundreds of inherent problems, both major and minor, that must constantly be dealt with. "Rigging the house was our most difficult effort," Wood recalls. "There were just so many things to keep in mind: the safety of the stunt people, bringing the fire under control after the house is razed, constant wariness of the shifting winds and extreme heat. Even shooting at night hinders you, especially when you're dealing with something as potentially dangerous as fire. But you know, there's nothing in the world quite like setting something on fire and watching it go up. Nothing like it at all."

During the course of both film and book, Charlie's flick-of-the-Bic eyes cast their flaming gaze in the direction of barnyard chickens, gun-toting Shop agents, and shiny new agency cars fresh off a Detroit assembly line. By sheer force of will, she empties the pay phones in a large city airport (scalding a sailor's feet in the process), turns a frozen lake into a cauldron of steam, and brings the aforementioned mansion, utilized as Shop headquarters, to an abrupt and ashen end.

Through it all, however, through the endless chases in the dead of night, through the intentional torchings of enemies and the accidental burning of innocent bystanders, through the fear, the tears, the constant pressing danger, the story remains as simple and as basic as any that could be told. Despite its immense weight of horror, it is a love story between a weary, beaten father and a stubborn, tough, but brittle little girl named Charlie. Writing about horror may be what Stephen King does best, but what may well be the secret to his success is his amazing ability to take a reader deep into the center of a child's mind, brush back the layers, and reveal the love, tenderness, and beauty that lie below.

It was this unique mix of love and horror which reached out and grabbed the interests of director Mark Lester. "DeLaurentiis gave me the book to read," Lester recalls, "and I loved it—especially the political and social implications that King was dealing with in a not-so-subtle manner. But the fact that I felt it was a great love story between father and daughter is what really

made me want to make it into a movie."


With the exception of combining a number of characters into one, the script by Stanley Mann (*The Collector*, *Omen II*) follows the book as closely as filming allowed. "Stephen made suggestions," Lester says, "quite a few of which we listened to." Reflecting back on the eleven weeks it took to bring *Firestarter* to the screen, he puts heavy emphasis on the care that went into the project. "We all worked very, very hard, and I think the results are evident on screen. We spent four weeks shooting the last three minutes of the film. We've got action up there that hardly ever has been shown before—fireballs flying through the air, people turning to charcoal, explosions of all kinds. On top of all that, we've got this terrific love story. What the hell more could you ask for?"

You've also got a bit of a message, albeit an unpleasant one, about how the United States government has injected people with drugs, often dangerous ones, all of it done, of course, in the name of science and for the good and fair fight against communism. That someone—child, adult, or animal—may come out of these experiments damaged in mind or body or, as here, with the ability to set fires (pyrokinesis) is, to the experimenters, simply a part of life that must be handled ... and handled quietly.

"There's a lot more to *Firestarter* than fires," Lester says. "It lashes out at situations which we must, sooner or later, face up to. Who knows what sort of drug tests were administered during the sixties? Does the government experiment with pyrokinesis? If it does, why? By using the thrust of a father and daughter on the run, a plot device where you can't help but be sympathetic to the little girl, the point is made in an even stronger fashion than if we had just come out and condemned anyone for secret experimentation. The book ends with Charlie in the offices of *Rolling Stone* about to tell her story. We sent her to the *New York Times* instead."

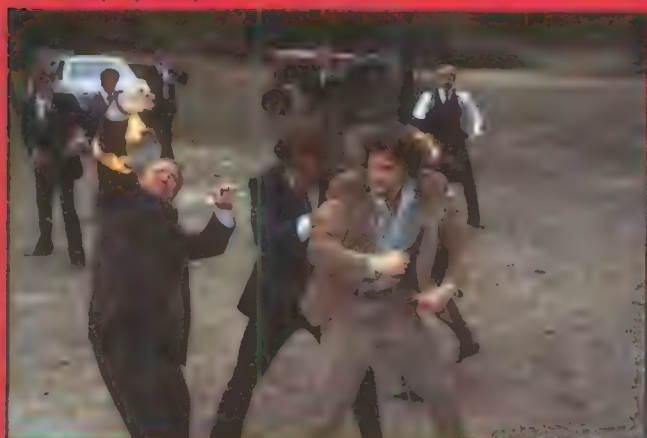
Concludes Lester: "It doesn't really matter where she goes. What's important is the fact that she *does* go and get her story out to the public." (King's novel, in fact, was lauded by the ACLU and other groups for bringing to light a subject that desperately needed an airing. In recent months King himself has been campaigning for Democrat hopeful Gary Hart.)

It is very hard not to cheer for Charlie McGee's victory—this despite the fact that all around her people and buildings explode into great balls of fire. As she stands at attention, her face a study in concentration—as the bodies fly, wood chips and crackles, water boils, cars choke on their own fumes, cement melts, grass turns dark brown, and the Shop is destroyed—you are overcome with feelings of pity, not horror. She is, after all, merely fighting back at the causes for her own hard-to-control demons.

"Charlie is," says one of the film technicians, "just a nice, cuddly, cute, little girl. The kind you'd want as your own. The only difference between her and my girl is that when my girl gets angry, she has a tantrum and throws things. When Charlie gets angry, watch out—the place turns into a furnace. But can you really blame her for doing the things she does? Well, can you?" 



Playing saddle shoes! Charlie Malina's pyrotechnic powers can give an innocent bystander a hotfoot (above) or come to her father's aid when he's kidnapped by agents from "the Shop" (below).



The Indian assassin gets his girl as Charlie falls to Rainbird's drug-tipped arrow



"There's nothing in the world like setting something on fire and watching it go up."

—Special effects man
Mike Wood

The Shop's headquarters meet a fiery fate in a climax that carries on where *Carrie* left off.

3182873

It's that season again...

when girls and rockets
soar, bikers and gremlins
prowl the streets, and
Hollywood greets the
warm weather with a
flood of youth pictures.

3182873

TWILIGHT ZONE TICKET—ADMIT ONE



Helen Slater takes to the skies in this July's *Supergirl*.



Street of Fire, directed by Walter Hill (*The Warriors*, *48 Hours*), pits newcomer Michael Paré and butch sidekick Amy Madigan (above) against a biker gang called "the Bombers." Featuring stylized '50s sets (below), this rock-'n'-violence fantasy is set in a timeless world, neither past, present, nor future.



Harrison Ford and company head for the Palace of Pankot in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, filmed in Macao and Sri Lanka.

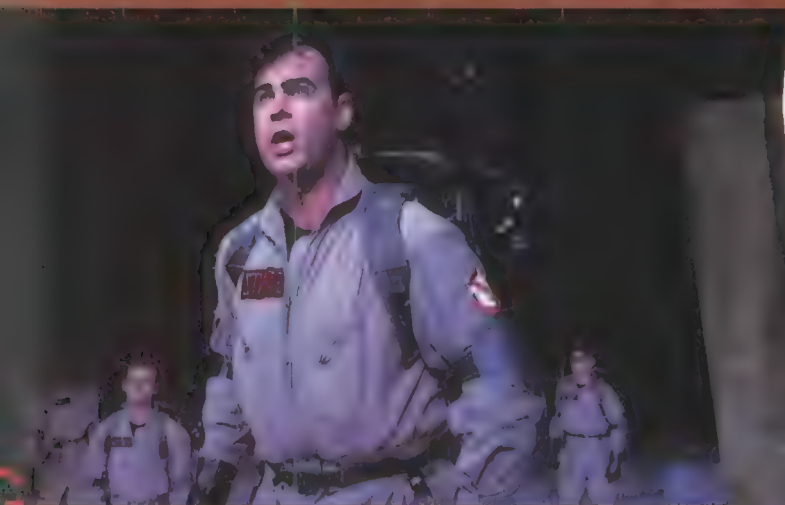
Photo credits: *Supergirl*: © 1983 DC Comics, Inc. The Philadelphia Experiment: © 1984 New World Cinema. The Last Starfighter: 1983 Universal City Studios, Inc. Ghostbusters: 1984 Universal City Studios, Inc. Gremlins: 1984 Warner Bros. Inc.



Secret naval research into invisibility goes awry in **The Philadelphia Experiment**. Michael Paré (also in *Beats of Fire*) stars with Nancy Allen.



A video-game freak discovers that he's really been training for intergalactic warfare in **The Last Starfighter**, starring Lance Guest, Robert Preston, and, beneath the scales, Dan O'Herlihy.



Ghostbusters Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, and Harold Ramis play NYU-trained parapsychologists who come face to face with paranormal forces that have been plaguing New York City.



Eye Luke (of *Charlie Chan* fame) and Hoyt Axton in **Gremlins**, which director Joe Dante describes as "a cross between *It's a Wonderful Life* and *The Birds*."



A Arnold Schwarzenegger returns in **Conan the Destroyer**.

STAR TREK III goes on a hunt for Spock

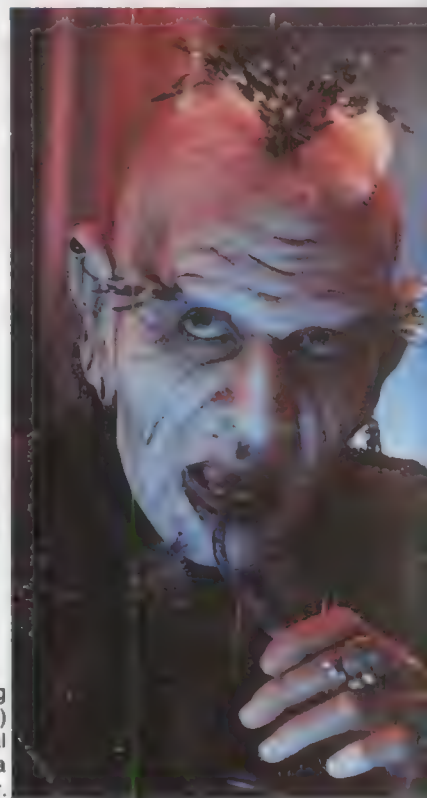


Above: Time for nostalgia as Kirk reviews tapes of the late Mr. Spock's final moments.

Christopher Lloyd (of tv's *Taxi*) plays Lord Kruge, the Klingon battle commander.



Admiral Kirk (William Shatner), phaser at the ready, with the old gang: Dr. McCoy (DeForest Kelley), Chekov (Walter Koenig), Scotty (James Doohan), and Sulu (George Takei).



An unsavory-looking alien (Alan Miller) tries to strike a deal with McCoy in a San Francisco bar.

...and Leonard Nimoy is leading the search.

THE *ENTERPRISE*'S FIRST OFFICER MAY HAVE DIED IN *STAR TREK II*, BUT NOW HE'S RETURNED—AS THE DIRECTOR OF THE THIRD FILM IN THE SERIES.

Interviewer James Verniere reports:

If Anthony Perkins is haunted by the ghost of Norman Bates, is Leonard Nimoy spooked by Spock? Could be, says Nimoy, a quietly authoritative man with a scimitar's edge to his voice, but it's all right with him. Despite the misinterpretations that followed the publication of Nimoy's autobiography, *I Am Not Spock*, Nimoy regards the Vulcan as the friendliest of ghosts.

For millions of the world's "Trekkies," Nimoy—who has been an actor since childhood—is Spock, the half-human/half-alien first officer of the starship *Enterprise*, a role Nimoy originated and perfected during the *Star Trek* television series' run from 1966 to 1968. Nimoy is so identified with the part that some casual fans of the widely syndicated series don't even know the actor's real name. To them he is simply "Mr. Spock," a confusion which, far from being an insult, is a tribute to both the mythic power of the character and the skill with which the actor has brought him to life. For an entire generation of videophiles, a raised eyebrow and a murmured "Fascinating!" are pure Spockisms, semaphores of the Vulcan's essential characteristics: skepticism, detachment, empiricism, and, to a certain degree, aloofness.

But Spock is more than just a cool green cucumber with pointed ears; he is, for his fans, a kind of intergalactic Zen master. He is also the incarnation of contradiction. Half emotional human, half dispassionate Vulcan, he is a being at



Nimoy directs George Takei on the Genesis planet set (top), and instructs cinematographer Charles Correll (below).



A KLINGON FEMME FATALE



JAMES VERNIERE TALKS WITH CATHIE SHIRRIFF, THE ATTRACTIVE EXTRATERRESTRIAL ON OUR COVER.

Sometimes being bad can be good, as Cathie Shirriff proves in *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*. Shirriff, who has a small but pivotal role in the film, plays Valkris, a curvaceous Klingon spy, a part that demanded a mastery of the Klingon language. The only problem was that there was no Klingon language, at least not until one was developed for the film by a professional linguist. As a result, viewers will have to divide their time between looking at the sexy Valkris and reading her lines in the subtitles that will accompany her appearance.

Mastering a new language was no great challenge to Ms. Shirriff, a former language student and the product of a well-to-do Canadian family. Shirriff abandoned her studies to become a model, gracing the pages of magazines like *Vogue* and *Cosmopolitan*, before breaking into screen acting. Her feature film debut was in the role of a Playboy Bunny opposite the late David Niven in *Old Dracula* (British title: *Vampira*). Featured parts soon followed in *All That Jazz* and the television miniseries *The Starmaker*. Prior to landing a role in *Star Trek III*, Ms. Shirriff was the original cohost (along with Jack Palance) of *Ripley's Believe It or Not*.

TZ: How did you get cast as a sexy Klingon spy in *Star Trek III*?

Shirriff: Actually, I was told by the people on the film—and this might be hearsay—that the role was originally to be played by Glenda Jackson. But she had a time problem and couldn't do it, luckily for me.

It's not a large part, but I'm thrilled to have done it.

TZ: Did you really have to learn to speak Klingonese for the film?

Shirriff: Yes, the language was developed by a man named Marc Okrand. He's a linguist from Washington who developed both the Vulcan and the Klingon languages for the film. In fact, he developed whole alphabets and syntaxes. The result, though, in the case of Klingonese, is a very difficult language to speak. It's very guttural, and although I speak some English in the film, my role will be in Klingonese with subtitles.

TZ: Your character's name is Valkris. Can you describe her?

Shirriff: She's fiercely proud and very strong and completely dedicated to the film's villain. I can't tell you more than that without revealing the plot.

TZ: How were you treated by the *Star Trek* regulars? It's been suggested that newcomers to the set are sometimes treated coolly.

Shirriff: I don't know about that, since I worked only with new characters. Leonard Nimoy, the director, who is of course an old hand at *Star Trek*, was very friendly and more than a little helpful.

TZ: You were the cohost of *Ripley's Believe It or Not*. What was the most unbelievable thing you remember?

Shirriff: The most unbelievable thing was that on a four-week schedule we had locations in thirteen different countries. It was exciting and exhausting, but believe it or not, I loved every minute of it.

war with himself, a war he keeps in continual stalemate through his extraordinary self-discipline.

During the turbulent sixties, it was Spock's asexual pose that may have made him the soul mate of a generation of sexually ambivalent adolescents. Spock was not passion's slave; he was its master. And he was living proof that being different was not so bad.

The Spock who reappeared in the first two *Star Trek* films was different. He was older, of course, but he was also something of a tragic figure, cloaked in melancholy. Watching him greet the *Enterprise* crew once more, he seemed a rather solitary being. Not only had we missed him; his shipmates had, too—and he them. Perhaps this is why his death at the end of *STII* had even nonbelievers reeling. It was a blow greater than any Khan could have delivered, striking right at the heart of the *Star Trek* myth.

The fact that Nimoy has been given the helm of *Star Trek III* should come as no surprise to those familiar with the actor's previous credits as a stage and television director; but for Nimoy it is a unique opportunity to come to final terms with his celebrated alter ego. We spoke with him while he was helping to score a segment using such strange instruments as conch shells, Tibetan temple horns, and water glasses.

TZ: What can you tell us about the plot of *Star Trek III*?

Nimoy: Well, right now we're still working on the film. We're presently on the scoring stage, using some music that would be very appropriate to *The Twilight Zone* for some sequences on the Vulcan planet. As for the plot, the title, *The Search for Spock*, tells us something about the quest that will take place. And it would be silly to say at the end of the picture that we don't find Spock. The question is, What form do we find him in? He could be mutated. He could be pure energy. There will be plenty of surprises.

TZ: This is the first feature film you've directed. What kind of responsibility has this been?

Nimoy: It's an extremely long commitment, compared to theater and tv. I've been on this project for two years. The idea of my directing the film began to concretize about six months after the first talks. Then we worked on the story with the writer, Harve Bennett, who is also the producer.

TZ: We know you appeared in the *Twilight Zone* episode, "A Quality of (continued on page 60)

CONAN'S CREATOR JOINS FORCES WITH A TZ ARTIST
IN THIS EXCERPT FROM *THE LAST CAT BOOK*.

There is something particularly harrowing about the sight of an animal in pain; a desperate despair, undiluted by hope or reason, that makes it, in a way, a more awful and tragic sight than that of an injured human. In the agony cry of a cat all the blind abysmal anguish of the black cosmic pits seems concentrated.

by Robert E. Howard
Illustrations by Peter Kuper

It is a scream from the jungle, the death howl of a past unspeakably distant, forgotten and denied by humanity, yet which still lies like a sleeping shadow at the back of the subconscious, to be awakened into shuddering memory by a pain-edge yell from a bestial mouth.






Not only in agony and death is the cat a reminder of that brutish past. In his anger cries and his love cries, his gliding course through the grass, the hunger that burns shamelessly from his slitted eyes, in all his movements and actions is advertised his kinship with the wild, his tamelessness, and his contempt for man.

Pull a drowning kitten out of the gutter and provide him with a soft cushion to sleep upon, and cream as often as he desires. Shelter, pamper and coddle him all his useless and self-centered life. What will he give you in return? He will allow you to stroke his fur; he will bestow upon you a condescending purr, after the manner of one conferring a great favor. There the evidences of his gratitude end.





Giving nothing in return, he demands everything—and demands it in a rasping, hungry, whining squall that seems to tremble with self-pity, and accuse the world at large of perfidy and a broken contract.

The introverted feline conceives himself to be ever the center of the universe. 



His eyes are suspicious and avaricious, the eyes of a miser.



STAR TREK III

(continued from page 56)

Mercy," but few people realize that you also directed an episode of *Night Gallery*.

Nimoy: Yes, it was called "Death on a Barge." It was a kind of Romeo and Juliet story about a boy in love with a girl who was a vampire. She lived on a barge because her father wanted to keep her there, and the flowing water acted as a barrier. Lesley Ann Warren played the girl. She was marvelous. I never met Rod Serling, though.

TZ: As someone who's worked so much in the field of science fiction and fantasy, why do you suppose it's so popular?

Nimoy: Because it allows the imagination to soar. There's so much entertainment value in it. Fantasy has always had a fascination for young people, but in film it's been treated as a sub-genre—until now. I think that the *Star Trek* series proved to the filmmaking industry that there was a market for serious exploration. You know, a very important studio executive told me in 1972 that *Star Trek* simply did not have enough fans to make a film worthwhile. Like so many others, he had simply miscalculated the subject's appeal. It wasn't until *Star Wars* hit so big that the idea of a *Star Trek* film began to look respectable.

TZ: Had you been a fan of sf and fantasy yourself?

Nimoy: I've always enjoyed it, and somehow always drifted into working on it. I was in a science fiction serial made by Republic as far back as 1951. It was called *Zombies of the Stratosphere* and was released as a film as *Satan's Satellites*. I played a Martian.

TZ: Did you enjoy reading sf and fantasy when you were growing up?

Nimoy: Just the stuff for young people, like Tom Swift. But I drifted away from it as a young man.

TZ: As a director, what filmmakers have influenced you?

Nimoy: I love films that express human conflicts and personal struggles. *Grapes of Wrath* was a great early influence. Today I admire Spielberg and Lucas, but for different reasons. Lucas is a master of display. Spielberg is a master of emotional manipulation.

TZ: *Star Trek I* was generally perceived as a dry and expository film. *Star Trek II* was the other side of the sf coin—it was like pure popcorn. What will *III* be like?

Nimoy: I agree completely with your judgments, but I think that *Star Trek II* was a necessary move. What it did is put *Star Trek* back on track as a viable property. *Star Trek I* left the property like a whale on the beach. I hope that *III* pulls us back into a mix of excitement, adventure, and fully realized characters. Because I had been so involved with the show from the beginning, it was felt that I should be able to bring in some extra texture and some organic elements. That was my mandate.

TZ: One aspect of the original series that may have helped make it popular with young audiences was the sexual element. Almost every episode had a sexy woman or at least some sexual tension. Will there be any of that?

Nimoy: A lot more than in *Star Trek I*. Perhaps not built into the story, as we did in the series when we had that regular sizzling undertone. But there is a specifically sexy element in *III*.

TZ: What is your relationship to Spock now after eighteen years?

Nimoy: Well, we're both still working in the business! I'd rather be haunted than be an actor looking for work. I know there's been a controversy about my feelings toward Spock, but frankly, despite the bad connotations of my autobiography, I've always wanted to do good Spock, and often I have not been able to do it. Hopefully this is my opportunity to do it.

TZ: The fans of the show and your character are legion. What has been your relationship to them?

Nimoy: I am very grateful.

TZ: Can you sum up Spock's appeal in a few words?

Nimoy (laughs): I've had various sentences prepared to respond to this question, and they have to change. I think that all of us, particularly adolescents, go through periods when we think we're strange, unpopular, or unacceptable. Spock says that it's possible to be one's self and be content.

TZ: But as the character's popularity grew, he evolved. He was not so much an outcast in the later episodes.

Nimoy: That's another level. That has to do with his dignity and his intelligence, his loyalty and his perseverance.

TZ: Has it occurred to you that his popularity might have to do with his asexuality?

Nimoy: I don't think he is an asexual character.

TZ: But he does seem to control his

appetite, to be seemingly immune to women.

Nimoy: Yes, that's true, and often there have been female characters who have tried unsuccessfully to turn him on. The point is that he can handle the situation. He can handle his sexual nature.

TZ: Except during Amok Time.

Nimoy: Yes, the Pon Farr period.

TZ: Don't you think that it's possible to trace an evolutionary line from Spock to Boy George?

Nimoy: That's interesting—Spock to Bowie to Boy George. Okay. I concede that they are all popular heroes with young people.

TZ: How has it been possible to work as director—which is to say, the boss—with people who've been your acting peers?

Nimoy: I like to think we have a collaboration. In fact, every one of the members of the original cast has expressed satisfaction. Of course, they were all trepidatious and curious, at first, but I think they feel that, regardless of the number of lines or close-ups, they have participated.

TZ: What's it like directing yourself?

Nimoy: You've led me into a trap! Very clever, but sorry.

TZ: A bit about yourself, then. You were born in Boston in 1931. What was your background?

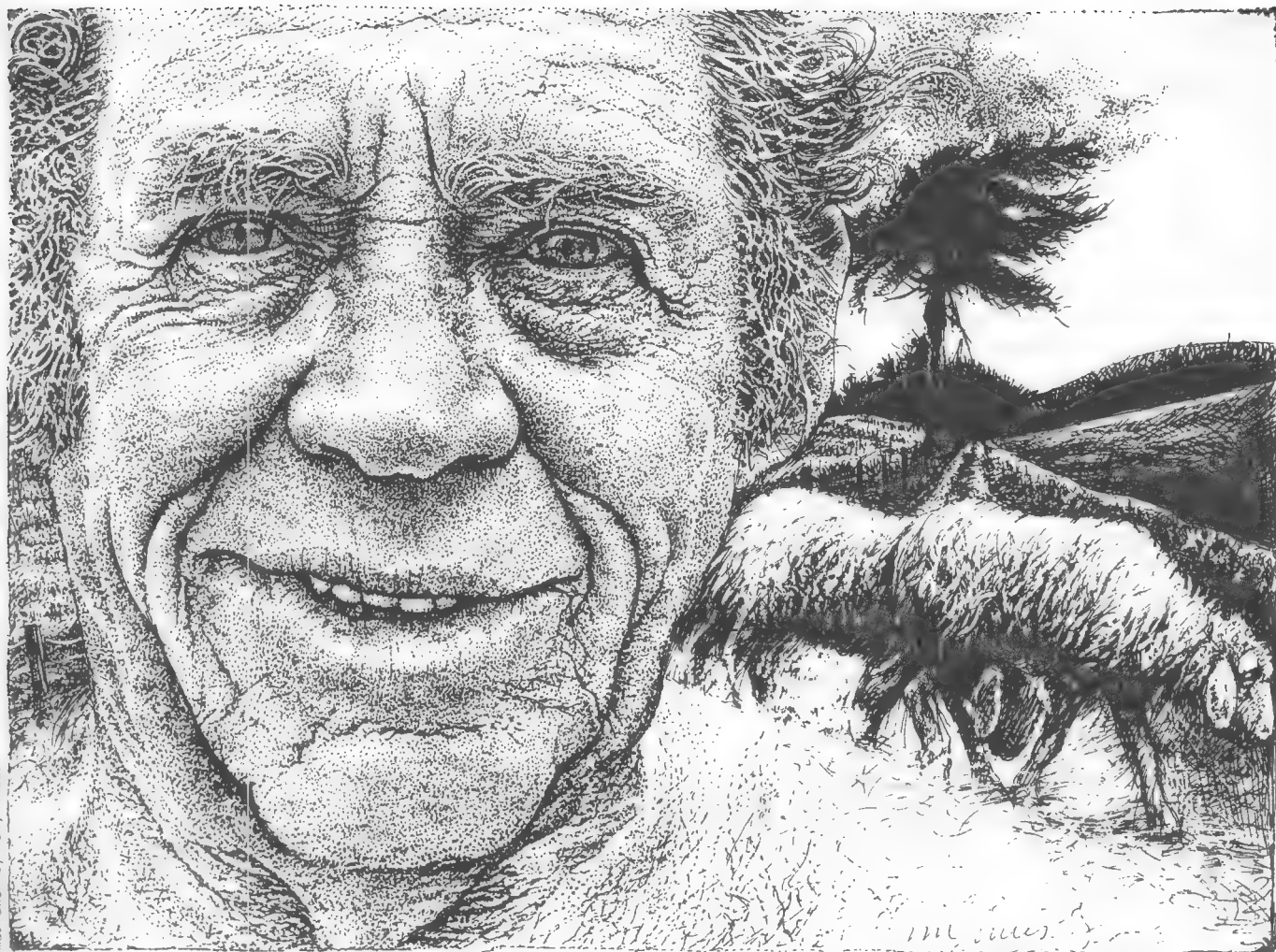
Nimoy: My father was a barber. I went to Boston College and got an M.A. just recently at Antioch College.

TZ: The myth of Hollywood is that it wreaks havoc on one's personal life, and yet you've been married to the same woman for thirty years. What's the secret?

Nimoy: We worked our way through it. It was tough being an actor—the demands on your time. You have to work to keep the relationship alive. Otherwise, it can wither. My wife and I have two children, twenty-nine and twenty-seven. My daughter is a production assistant and my son has just passed the bar.

TZ: One of the themes of *Star Trek* is that technology and progress will save the universe. It's part of the tradition of scientific positivism. Is that your view?

Nimoy: Yes, I still hope it's true. I still hope that the more we move away from this planet, the clearer our view of our place in the scheme of things will become. Discovery will bring us together. 17



THEY SAID THE OLD MAN WAS A HEALER—
BUT JOCKO WASN'T GETTING HEALED WITHOUT A FIGHT!

Not a Bad Job

by Richard Partlow

Jocko's eyes snapped open and squinted against the hard desert sun. Pain stabbed around the bullet stuck in his left shoulder. He knew he had passed out in the car and that with Wink doing the driving, he could die without knowing it. He stared at the passing desert with half-closed eyes. *Snake country.* He shuddered. Snakes or sheep, they were all the same. His hand pressed against the money taken from the bank. Not a bad job, except that now he needed a doctor.

Something was different. He listened. The car engine was laboring. He rolled his head to the left and glared at Wink's sweating face tilted up to shade his eyes.

"Change gears, Wink," said Jocko. "Don't blow the engine in this desert. Do it!" Pain exploded in his shoulder and tears sprang to his eyes. He turned away from Wink's startled face.

Wink shifted. "Sorry, Jocko. I was gonna shift easy, but I didn't want to wake you with that bad shoulder."

"Thanks. Just find a doctor," said Jocko.

"Ain't gonna be a doctor up this old road! Just old dirt houses, falling down and empty."

"Adobe," said Jocko. He heard Wink slap the steering wheel. He lay his head back and watched the desert retreating in the side mirror. The road climbed through chaparral and stunted pines. They would be in the mountains soon. He thought about that. Mountains were no better than desert. He closed his eyes.

Awake again. The car had stopped, its engine turning over softly in the cold evening air. There was Wink, digging the toe of his boot in the dust and talking with two men in front of a small country store.

Not a Bad Job

His shoulder was on fire. He lit a cigarette to ignore the pain. He glanced at Wink and blew smoke out angrily. *Probably telling them about the bullet*, he thought. He passed his eyes over the landscape and felt lonely as the orange light trailed from the sunset. Heavy clouds were spreading out from the mountaintops. He turned up his collar. It was dark among the pines.

He heard Wink return with a rustling grocery sack.

"How's the shoulder?" said Wink.

"Worse. Wake me next time. How far's the doctor?"

Wink looked up at the clouds through the windshield. "Well, they say there's no doctor. But there's a guy lives up the road. They use him. Helps out with the sick. Does animals, too."

"Animals?" said Jocko.

"He's the best they got," said Wink. "The best we got."

"I'll pay him to do his best," said Jocko.

Wink put the car in gear. "They said he don't charge."

"He sounds like a nut," said Jocko. He braced himself as the car jerked forward. "He's not a nut, is he?"

"They didn't say," said Wink.

"Where is this guy?"

Wink pointed ahead. "About nine miles. Past a lake and a sheep pen."

"What is he, a sheep herder?" The shoulder pain ground Jocko's voice down to a growl. "I hate sheep." He thought about it. "I'll check this nut out before I let him touch me. Make sure I come out of this alive." He looked out the window. No lights anywhere.

Wink said, "He's a holy man, they said. Want a beer?"

Jocko took a long gulp of beer. His mouth felt alive again and the beer relaxed his muscles. A *holy man to poke a bullet hole*, he thought and tried to smile. He finished the beer and tossed the can out of the window.

"Hey!" said Wink. "Don't do that."

Jocko stared ahead at the road. "What? We'll leave a trail?"

"Nature don't like it," said Wink. "It's bad luck!"

Jocko laughed. "Worse than robbing a bank. Wink, I didn't know you had religion."

He finished another beer as the car passed a lake. A flash of lightning was followed by a close crash of thunder. He dropped the empty can into the sack and cranked the window up as large raindrops splatted on the dusty windshield. Gazing out the window, he let his eyes follow a curve raked by the headlights. He was startled to see eyes glint and then vanish in the dark. Animals were huddled under a tree. He faced his reflection in the windshield. *Don't*

sheep sleep? Or are they like fish?

The car bounced on bumps in the road and he looked beyond the windshield. The headlights flashed on a stone house with a log roof. A man stood framed in the yellow glow of a lantern behind the open front door. The headlights swept past the man. Jocko caught a glimpse of red shirt and blue jeans. He was barefoot. Jocko shivered.

"Stop the car," said Jocko. He examined the darkness through the windows as Wink stuffed the carton of money under the driver's seat.

"I don't see any loose animals," said Jocko. "Let's go. I'll do the talking."

Jocko eased out of the car, trying to favor his shoulder. The cold rain hit his face and he stiffened, sending a jolt of pain to his shoulder. He looked up and saw the barefoot man wave from under a porch overhang in the lighted doorway of the house.

"Hello," Wink called out.

Jocko muttered to Wink. "I'll do the talking. I had dogs do better for me than you."

Jocko stepped onto the porch and eyed the barefoot man. "Looking to get in outta the rain," he said.

He walked into the house, sank into a kitchen chair, and rested his aching arm across the surface of a wooden table. *The man might do*, he thought. *He lived in a house*. Burning logs sparked in the fireplace, and Jocko blinked his eyes to bring the flames into focus. He was dimly aware of Wink standing near the fire, his gun dangling from his hand. *No time to show a gun*, he thought. Or was the sheep-man arming himself?

"Where'd that guy go?" said Jocko.

Wink pointed his gun to the back of the long room.

"Watch him," said Jocko. "And put that thing away. What did he say?"

"Just hello," said Wink.

Jocko warmed his fingers near the lantern and tried to see the man poking among the shadows. Sounded like he was kicking chairs and opening and closing umbrellas. *Going for his bear gun*, he thought uneasily.

"Get your gun back out, Wink." Jocko raised his voice. "Hey, Mister. Come here!"

"Stay where you are," said the man.

Jocko motioned to Wink and ran his eyes over the shadows.

The man carried a long object as his bare feet slapped along the floor toward them. Jocko saw him run his hand down the object and it snapped into an umbrella. He raised it over his head.

"I use this for all my surgery," he said. "It's better than a white sheet to see through and to observe the afflicted parts. Well sir, better than an X ray and keeps off the elements."

Jocko froze. The man had pointed the umbrella at him and was twirling it rapidly.

**The object
snapped into
an umbrella.
He raised it
over his head.
“I use this
for all
my surgery,”
he said.**

“Wink,” said Jocko. “Get me outta here.”

“That’s it!” said the man. His voice trembled behind the umbrella.

Jocko’s stomach tightened. The umbrella had stopped twirling. The man looked around the umbrella.

“I saw the bullet,” he said, and collapsed the umbrella.

Jocko glared at Wink and lowered his voice. “You told him.” Wink met his eyes and shook his head.

It was time to get out before the crazy sheepman jumped them, thought Jocko. But he was too tired to walk out.

The man said, “My name is Horn. Born on a rough passage around the Cape.”

Jocko gripped the edge of the table and ignored the man’s extended hand. “Wink told you about the bullet.”

Horn smiled. “Didn’t have to. The umbrella confirmed the bullet, but I knew to look for it. Sit down and rest.” He sniffed the air and crossed to a wood-burning stove.

Jocko sank back in his chair and watched the man carry a steaming pot to the table. The man motioned to Wink to pull up a chair while he filled the bowls from the pot and set a bowl in front of Jocko.

“I stretched the soup for three.” He licked soup off his finger. “Had a dry sky earlier today. I expected you to beat the rain. Get some soup in you now.”

Wink said, “How’d you know all that?”

Jocko glanced at Wink and saw that he was impressed. Jocko felt abandoned.

“Radio,” said Horn. “Sees farther than an umbrella.” He laughed and plunged his spoon into his soup and stirred, glancing from Jocko to Wink.

“Radio thought you might head this way.”

It was easier to listen to the soup. It seemed to crackle and Jocko studied it. Looked like leaves and bark through the blurry steam. He shot a look at Wink and received a nod as Wink ate it. Without looking at it. He was annoyed for bothering to check with Wink. He stirred it and looked away. It tasted kind of pleasing and smelled oddly like a basement he had played in as a child one snowy winter.

He felt himself slipping away and focused on the man’s face. It was just a face, doing its job. The dark eyes looked like they had worked at sea. Jocko felt uneasy. He was good at reading faces because they turned away. This man stared back and smiled like they shared something in common.

Jocko pointed his spoon at the man. “You’re a sudden man with your umbrellas and radios. You pull this bullet and I will pay you good money to be quiet. Do it!”

The man waved his spoon in the air and Jocko felt a drop of soup hit his cheek. “I don’t take money. I will remove the bullet, but you will return the money to the bank.”

Jocko wiped his cheek and dried his fingers on the lining of his coat. He turned to Wink. “Do you plan on going to jail?”

Wink pushed his bowl aside. “Thanks for the soup. But that’s a crazy idea.” He put his gun on the table and spread his hand over it. “We’re not returning our money.”

Jocko banged his spoon against his bowl. “That’s your answer, sheepman. And don’t you think we’re not grateful for the soup. But we keep the money. You keep the bullet. And, if you mess up my shoulder, my friend will shoot little pieces out of you.”

Horn smiled at Wink. Jocko looked at Wink and saw that his mouth was open.

Horn stood and walked to the window. “You have your standards, I see, just like in a gangster movie.”

Jocko gripped his spoon and watched him gazing out of the window. A log settled in the fireplace.

“And I have my standards,” said Horn. “Yes, I do. It will rain and snow tonight. I will repair your shoulder and you can stay for the night.” He turned to them. “And in the morning, you will mail the money to the bank from the store. And go home. Now clear the table for the operation.”

Jocko nodded to Wink and watched him join the man at the sink. He listened to them cleaning up the dishes and talking above the sound of rain rattling on the windows. Wink sounded like he was camping out. Having a good time. Jocko felt cold except for the fire in his shoulder. He blinked and his eyes watered. He had no choice.

Not a Bad Job

"It's a deal," he said at last. "How many operations you done?"

"I've lost count," answered Horn, wiping his hands on his pants.

"People, or sheep?"

"I never ask," said Horn. "You should lie down on the table." He turned to Wink. "Hang the lantern on that nail."

Jocko lay down on a blanket spread across the table. He raised his head and scanned the open shelves in the shadows above the sink.

"I want whiskey for my pain."

"Never touch it," said Horn.

"Wink," said Jocko. "Get me outta here. I can't do it."

He felt Wink's hand on his head. "He explained it to me, Jocko. It's not nature's way."

Jocko pushed Wink's hand away. "It's my way!"

His eyes stopped on Horn.

"This is what I use to probe for the bullet," said Horn. He held up a potato peeler and rattled the loose blade. He wiped the peeler on the seat of his pants, examined it, and then flicked away some dried material stuck to the blade.

"You're crazy!" Jocko pushed against the table, but felt Wink's hands pressing him down. His tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth. *I'm gonna die*, he thought, and felt hot tears run down his cheeks. He heard the man's voice.

"It won't hurt. Think of something nice. Think of the soup."

Jocko gagged, but then felt a peacefulness steal over him. He heard Wink talking, but did not listen. He was not interested.

Awake again. Something was different. He felt terrific. He thought about it. The pain was gone and his shoulder moved easily. The table was hard and a blanket covered him. His nose itched. *Must be wool*. He sneezed. Turning his head he could see the dawn through a frosted window. The fire burned low in the fireplace and Wink lay curled on a rug in front of it.

"Wink," he called. "I'm okay. Let's go."

Wink lifted his head. Horn turned around from the stove and carried steaming cups to them.

"Here's some tea. Not too hot," he said. "Had a big snow last night. Looks like a good day beginning."

Jocko sipped his tea. "My shoulder feels great. That all there is to it?"

Horn snatched up his open umbrella, aimed it at Jocko, and twirled it.

"Ha! Very good healing." He peeked around the umbrella and beamed at Jocko.

The flared umbrella made Jocko uneasy, like it could read his thoughts. *Like skipping the store and keeping the money*. He looked away while Horn collapsed the umbrella and leaned it in a corner.

"I feel good enough to drive," said Jocko and stared hard at Horn. "To the store, of course."

Horn smiled.

Jocko turned to Wink. "Right, Wink? Time to hit the morning mail."

"I ain't going, Jocko."

Jocko stared at Wink in surprise. Wink looked up shyly from the fire where he was warming his hands.

"You can take the car, Jocko. I'm staying to learn healing from Horn. He asked me to."

Jocko hid his delight. "Well, so long, Wink."

He crossed to the door, thinking of sheep eating soup with Wink and then maybe stretching out on the operating table. *Muttonhead*, he thought, and grinned.

He jerked the door open and quick-stepped outside. He jumped back and grabbed the door. People stared at him curiously from a long line that began at the door and stretched back through the snow. *Maybe fifty people*, he thought. *Men, women, and children. All bundled up.*

Horn stepped past him and raised his arms in greeting. "Good morning, my friends." He scanned the line of people. His face brightened. "Morning, Sheriff. Annual check-up for you and the boys?" He turned to Jocko. "They like to get one from me as well as from the county."

Jocko spotted three uniformed men waving at them. Sweat broke out on his face. "I've got to go now." He jumped down the steps and heard Horn call out.

"Put enough postage on that package or they won't deliver! It was nice meeting you!"

He pushed through the snow and slammed into his car. The motor turned over slowly, caught, and quit in a backfire of black smoke. It would not turn again. He wiped the sweat off his face. The windows were fogging. He rubbed the windshield clear and saw a sheep staring up at him. A man in line gazed at him sympathetically, then turned away. Jocko's hands fell away from the wheel.

He jerked the door open and saw a deputy break away from Horn and walk toward him. He wanted to run, but sheep were everywhere.

"Morning," shouted the deputy. "Car trouble, huh? Doc said to give you a lift to catch the morning mail."

"Thanks anyway," said Jocko. "I'd like to walk it." He tried to smile. "I'm a walking fool."

"No trouble," said the deputy. "We have to hurry to catch the police chopper at the store. It's bringing in supplies and mail because of the storm. Another storm on the way. Doc says he can put you up for a month or so. Not a bad job, if you ask me."

He followed the deputy through the milling sheep. He began to sneeze. *Must be the wool*, he thought, blinking through tears. . 17



ALL FALL DOWN

'HOME SWEET HOME' WAS A HAUNTED HOUSE—AND A PRISON.

by Don Traverso

At five that morning the bed turns itself on its side and flips her off it, so abruptly that she hits the floor with a loud thump. She shrieks, then looks about her room, startled. She sees the bed return itself to its normal position.

"What the—?"

"It's five a.m.," the room replies. "Time to get up, Laurie."

Laura winces. She hates it when they call her Laurie. It makes her feel like a little girl. At twenty-four, she is definitely not a little girl.

"It's too early." She starts to climb back into bed. It moves away from her. She tries again. This time the bed levitates out of her reach. She sighs. "Fine," she says, frustrated. "I'll just sleep here." She lies down on the floor. From just beneath her head

ALL FALL DOWN

comes a loud, sharp knocking.

She sits up. "Leave me alone. It's too early!"

"You didn't finish your chores yesterday," the bedroom answers. "In order to get today's chores done, you have to get up early and finish yesterday's chores. Also, you still haven't cleaned that mess in the cellar."

"No," Laura says, suddenly frightened. "I won't go down there. I can't."

"You must. It's been six weeks already. What's done is done. You have to get over it."

"No."

"Stop acting childish. You're a grown woman—"

"Am I really?" Laura shouts at the ceiling.

The bed crashes loudly on the floor. It is a sturdy bed, able to withstand the sudden drop without damage. Another voice, deeper, masculine, thunders through the walls. "Don't you talk like that to your mother, girl! You respect your elders. Don't you question what we say."

Laura stands up. She wants to beat the walls with a chair, with her fist, anything. "Even if it isn't right? I'm a grown woman, remember? I can make my own decisions!"

The male voice answers again. "You be quiet, girl. You're beginning to sound like *him*. We should have never allowed him in this house."

Laura is quiet. She is thinking back to the time eight weeks ago ...

"Yes," she murmurs. "He should have never come to this house."

At nine that morning Laura heard the knocking at the front door. It was an unfamiliar sound. No one lived nearby, and travelers rarely passed the old house. The few who did stop never entered, for Laura never answered the door.

She turned over, pulling her blanket over her shoulder, closing her eyes again and ignoring the second knock. Then she heard another noise: the click of the front doorknob turning. She sat up at a shouted "Hello?"

Her heart raced. Nobody had ever come into the house before. Someone whispered to her.

"Don't say anything. Maybe he'll go away."

A masculine voice countered, "He's already in the house. Go downstairs and tell him to leave."

"She can't," the softer feminine voice replied. "You don't know what he might do. Just let him think the house is empty. He'll go away."

"Our house doesn't look empty. He might try to steal something. Laurie, go down and tell him to leave."

"Hello?" the man downstairs called again.

Laura got up slowly off the bed. She was shaking, not only with fear, but with excitement. She had not seen anyone but her parents in years; in fact, it had been years since she had seen her

parents. With a fascination she found disturbing, she longed to see this stranger who dared to enter the house unbidden. Even so, she held her mother's old metal brush in her hand when she went to her bedroom door.

"Laurie," the male voice hissed, "put on your robe, girl! You seem to want something to happen to you!"

Laura didn't know what he meant, but she didn't question him. She put on her robe and walked silently to her door. She could hear the stranger moving around downstairs, as if searching for something. Slowly she turned the doorknob and slipped out of her room. Keeping to the shadows, she crept over to the balcony. There was no one in the living room and no more sound of footsteps. *Maybe he left*, she thought, surprised at her own disappointment. She started down the stairs when he stepped out from the dining room. She gasped. He gave a start.

"Oh ... ah ... hello," he said.

She raised the hairbrush.

"Hey, uh, it's not what you think," he continued. "My car broke down a few miles from here and I couldn't find a gas station anywhere. I knocked, but no one answered. Your door was open, so ... I came in to find a phone."

Laura stood there, brush still raised.

"Can I ... use your phone?"

She stared at him for a minute. *He's much younger than Father was*, she thought. *His skin is darker, too. He isn't as tall as Father was, either. He doesn't look like Father at all.* Mustering her courage, she spoke, the brush still poised to strike.

"What is a phone?"

He gave her a disbelieving look. *Did I say something wrong?* she asked herself.

"A telephone," he replied after a moment. "So I can call for a tow truck."

She shook her head. "What is a phone?"

He stared at her, then sighed. "Ma'am, I know I probably startled you and that I shouldn't have walked into your house like I did. I'm sorry. If you don't want me to use your phone, just say so and I'll leave, okay?"

He's upset. Why? she thought. He was almost at the door when she called out, "I'm sorry, but I really don't know what a phone is. I'm sorry."

He paused. "You *are* serious, aren't you?" he said, finally.

She nodded her head slowly.

Now he seemed more nervous. "I'm sorry for speaking to you the way I did. I ... I didn't think it was possible, actually, but this is the country, isn't it? I'm sorry, I didn't mean that the way it sounded. I've had a hard day." He looked at her and quickly glanced away.

No, he isn't like Father at all, Laura thought. She lowered the brush a little.

He shuffled his feet nervously. "Is—uh—is there another house around here close by? Or a gas station, maybe?"

The brush dangled at her side. "Jensen is about twenty miles to the east. Fairdale is forty miles southwest."

He sighed. "You're right. And there're none between here and Jensen." He looked at his feet. "I know I haven't the right to ask, but can I rest here for a while? I'm really not used to walking long distances."

Laura hesitated. She remembered her reason for coming down. *They will be angry, she thought, but he does look tired.* She smiled nervously.

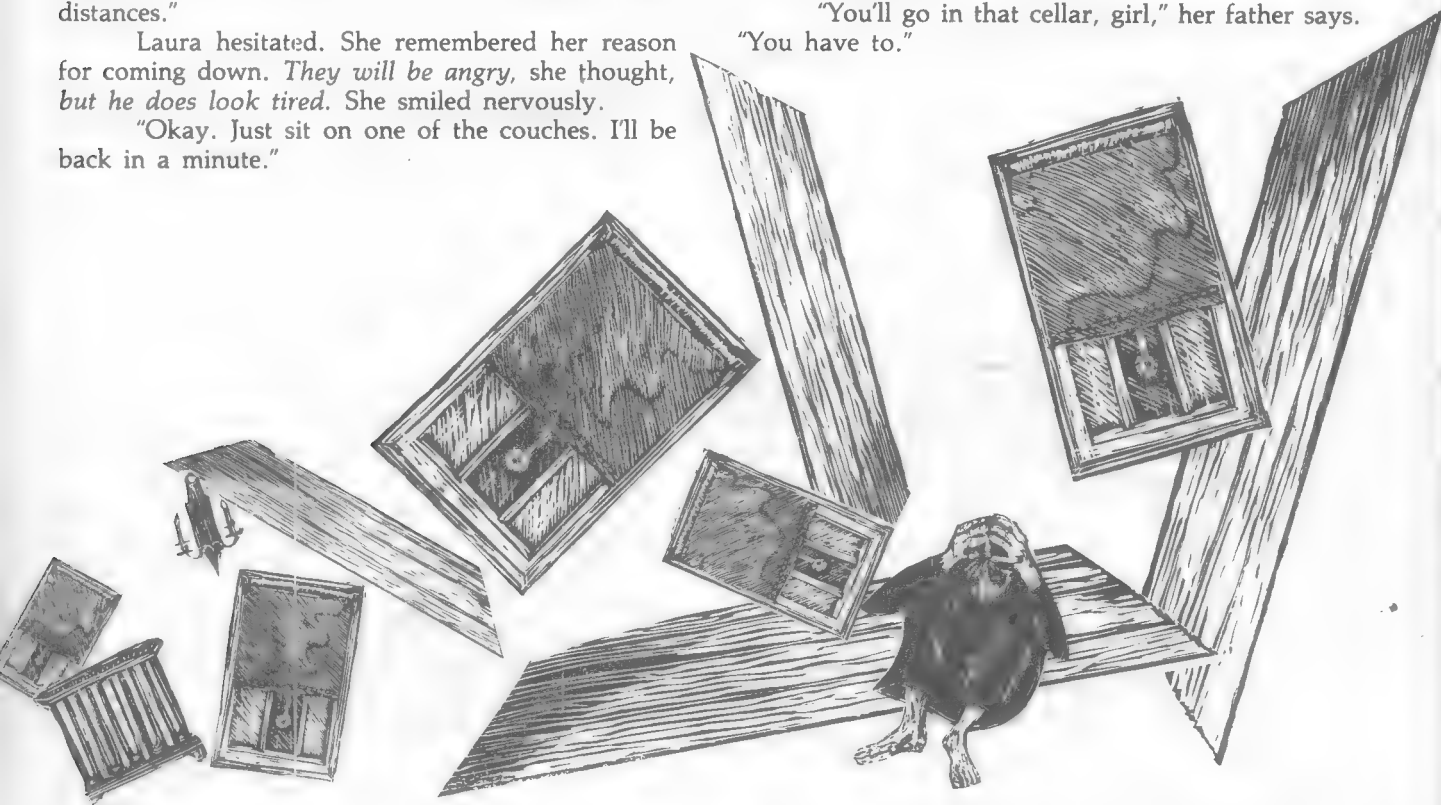
"Okay. Just sit on one of the couches. I'll be back in a minute."

"You're good and ready now, girl. I want that cellar cleaned *today*. Get to it."

Laura throws the plates at the wall. "How many times do I have to tell you? I won't do it. *You* made the mess, *you* clean it up!"

She storms out of the kitchen. As she is about to step into the living room, another crack sounds. The floor beneath her sinks a couple of feet. She shrieks and jumps quickly to another spot. The floor doesn't collapse.

"You'll go in that cellar, girl," her father says. "You have to."



"Thanks," he said. She walked back to her bedroom. Inside, the voices hissed at her.

"Why didn't you let him leave, girl? What the hell did you think you were doing, inviting him to stay?"

"Your father's right, Laurie. You shouldn't have let him stay. Go down and ask him to leave."

"The man is tired," Laura replied. "He just wants a little rest. What harm can he do?"

"Don't question us, girl! Tell him to leave, *now*."

"I'll tell him to leave," said Laura, "when he's rested a bit."

Laura is putting the dishes away when she hears the loud crack somewhere below her. She ignores it and walks into the kitchen.

"When are you going to finish yesterday's chores, girl?"

She looks up. "When I'm good and ready."

"Laurie, please—!"

It was two in the afternoon when he finally left. They had been silent for the first half-hour, but their mutual curiosity had gotten the better of them.

His name was Daniel Talbert. Hers was Laura Reardon; call her Laura, not Laurie. Fine, as long as she didn't call him Danny; it made him feel like a kid. Really? That's the same reason she didn't like being called Laurie.

They talked about anything for an hour more before he asked her, "How is it you never heard of a telephone?"

She looked at her hand playing with her glass of water. "My parents never had one. Maybe they never heard of them either. Anyhow, they never told me of any such thing."

"Do you live with your parents?"

"Where do you come from?"

"Oh, from all around. I travel a lot. But I'm going to settle down in Fairdale. You didn't answer my question."

ALL FALL DOWN

"I know."

He left it at that. They talked up a storm until, at two o'clock, he decided he should leave. He told her how much he enjoyed her company. She smiled, no longer quite so nervous, and said that she enjoyed his. He stared at her for a moment, smiling. Then he left. The voices began almost immediately.

"You 'enjoyed his company? What the hell did you mean by that, girl?"

"I don't believe how you acted with that young man, Laurie. We brought you up to be a proper young lady. You've never done anything like this. Why?"

Laura was silent for a moment. "I'm never going to see him again," she said at last. "So why worry about it?" It failed to placate them.

With good reason, for he returned the next week.

She was washing clothes down in the cellar when she heard his voice.

"Laura! It's me, Daniel!"

It took a few seconds for the words to sink in. Then her heart jumped and her hands shook with excitement. She dropped the clothes in the sink and ran to the steps, bumping into a couple of cracked support beams and almost slipping on the wet floor. She raced up the stairs and flung open the front door. Daniel seemed surprised and pleased at her breathlessness as she gasped, "You—you've come back!"

He made a flourish with his hand. "Madam," he said in a mock-dignified voice, "may I beg entrance into your humble abode?"

Laura giggled. "Sure. Come on in."

"No beating around the bush. That's what I like about you." He handed her a bottle. "A little present."

She studied the label curiously. "What is it?"

"Some wine I picked up on the way. It's French. I think you'll like it."

He was in a happy mood, and joked with Laura as he followed her into the kitchen to get a couple of glasses. Every time he laughed, she felt as if her soul had taken wing. When he heard she was doing laundry, he offered, then insisted, that he help her. He wasn't much help. He kept splashing water on her, until she splattered a handful of suds into his face. In ten minutes, they were soaked, their clothes covered with blobs of suds.

After she changed clothes, she sat close to Daniel on the living room couch. He looked funny in her pink robe. He stroked her hair with his right hand. "Why doesn't your front door have a lock?" he asked.

She put her hands on his shoulder and rested her head on them. "None of the doors in this house do, except the door to my parents' bedroom. It seems to be locked."

"Seems to be?"

"It doesn't have a lock, but I can't open it."

He stood up. "Let me have a look at it."

Abruptly her head came up and her hands gripped his shoulder. "No!"

"Why not?"

"Nobody's supposed to."

He looked puzzled. "Supposed to what?"

She rested her head again. He left it at that.

"Hey, I've got a good idea," he said after a while. "When my clothes get dry, why don't we go for a ride in my car? Maybe you know some nice quiet spot where we can relax and stare at a few clouds."

"I can't." Her voice was very low.

He put his arm around her. "Why not? Hey, you're trembling."

"I've got work to do."

"Do it tomorrow."

"I can't."

"Why not?"

"I . . . I've never been outside," she moaned.

"We don't have to go far, if that's—"

"I don't mean that. I've never been . . . out of this house."

He gave her that disbelieving look again. Silence, then: "You knew where Jensen and Fairdale are—"

"Because my father once told me where they were. He'd been there."

He eyed her pale skin as if for the first time.

"Where are your parents, Laura?"

She didn't answer.

"Are they dead, Laura? Is that why you don't want me to see your parents' room?"

"Leave it alone," she murmured. "Please, leave it alone."

He would not leave it alone. He broke from her embrace, rose from the couch, and, ignoring her protests, climbed the stairway. Laura charged up after him, pleading with him to stop; he was already opening doors and peering inside rooms.

When he reached *their* door, Laura fell to the floor, sobbing.

The door would not open.

Daniel knelt beside her. "I'm sorry, Laura," he said, hugging her. "I didn't mean to hurt you. I'm sorry."

He visited her every day for the next week, questioning her whenever she'd let him. Her replies troubled him. It seemed that Laura's diet consisted of venison, small rabbits, and squirrels, supplemented by nuts, berries, acorns, and water. All save the water (the kitchen had an old-fashioned water pump, fed from a well beneath the house) had to come from outside. Yet with her pale skin and her lack of worldly knowledge, it was clear that she had never *been* outside. There was a fully stocked rifle rack in the living room—her father,

**"My parents
have never
left this house,"
she said.
"And they
never will."**

Laura said, had been a deer hunter—but Daniel couldn't find a key to open it and Laura apparently didn't have one. She had never been to school; she claimed that her parents had taught her themselves. Both of them were dead (she'd said once, in passing, that she hadn't "really" seen her parents since she was seventeen—seven years ago), yet she acted as if they were still alive and watching her. "My parents have never left this house," she told him in a matter-of-fact voice. "And they never will."

Three days after his unsuccessful attempt to gain entrance to their bedroom, Daniel asked Laura to come away with him. Fearfully she refused. He asked again, every day, as he left the house; and every day she refused him. But in her eyes he could see a growing desire to escape.

The fifth time he asked her, she cried. "I can't. I just *can't*. Please accept that." She was shaking.

He shook his head. "No. You're a grown woman now. It's time you went out into the world. There are no locks in this prison of yours. You can just walk out, walk away."

"My parents—"

"Your parents are dead, Laura."

"No," she said, "they aren't." She turned away.

"They're dead, Laura. Even if they were alive you couldn't cling to them. You've got to take responsibility for your own life."

Laura couldn't contain her sobbing. "I—I can't."

"You're headed for a great fall. What little there is of your life is going to collapse—and you'll fall with it. . . . Laura, I love you. I'll do anything with you. I'll laugh with you, I'll cry with you, I'll be with you in your worst, most painful moments. But I won't fall with you, I can't. Please, Laura, *please*. Come with me."

Laura took his hand, held the palm to her lips for a long moment, then held it tightly in her hands.

"I can't."

Gently he pulled his hand away. "I wish you a happy life, Laura," he said, his voice low. "I really do." And he left.

"Have you cleaned that cellar yet, girl?"
"Leave me alone, damn it! Leave me alone!"

"How dare you speak to your father that way! You respect—"

Laura kicks the coffee table. "Shut up! I can't stand it anymore! Shut up! Please!"

"Not until you clean that cellar, girl."

Laura looks up at the ceiling, eyes swollen and red. "All right, I'll go down there! I'll go clean up your mess!" She runs to the cellar door and flings it open.

The smell nearly overwhelms her. A towel lies at her feet where it was stuffed under the crack of the door. Her stomach heaves. She cups her mouth and nose with her hand and proceeds down the stairs. Waves of nausea and memories wash over her. She had gone to bed after Daniel had left. For several hours she cried, for she knew his final wish had also been a farewell. She buried her head in her pillow, then heard the noise of the doorknob downstairs turning.

Laura feels the burning bile surging in her throat. She struggles to hold it down, tries to hold the room straight in her vision. But her vision fades, and she sees (*No, I didn't see*, she thinks, *I was upstairs*) Daniel entering the house, calling her. He had come back to take her out of there, whether she liked it or not. She was about to call out, but her voice was choked with sobs. Suddenly, from the cellar, came the sound of water. Someone had just turned on the faucet in the downstairs sink. He heard it too. The cellar door opened, and his footsteps went lower and lower.

He had called her name once more before the crack came.

And now her vision clears. And she sees him.

Her parents knew that, whether she wanted to or not, she would leave with him. They knew that once out of the house, she would never come back. They had to stop him at all costs. And they did.

She stares at the decaying body lying under the heavy support beam. She had known all this time what had happened down here, had known what they had done to keep her there. . . . Another crack sounds, and Laura finds the source. She sees the crack forming where the beam once rested. She smiles grimly. They had to stop him at all costs. Now they are paying a very high price. So is she.

"Laurie," her father's voice says, much softer now, "you're a strong enough girl. See if you can put the beam back where it was. You can do it."

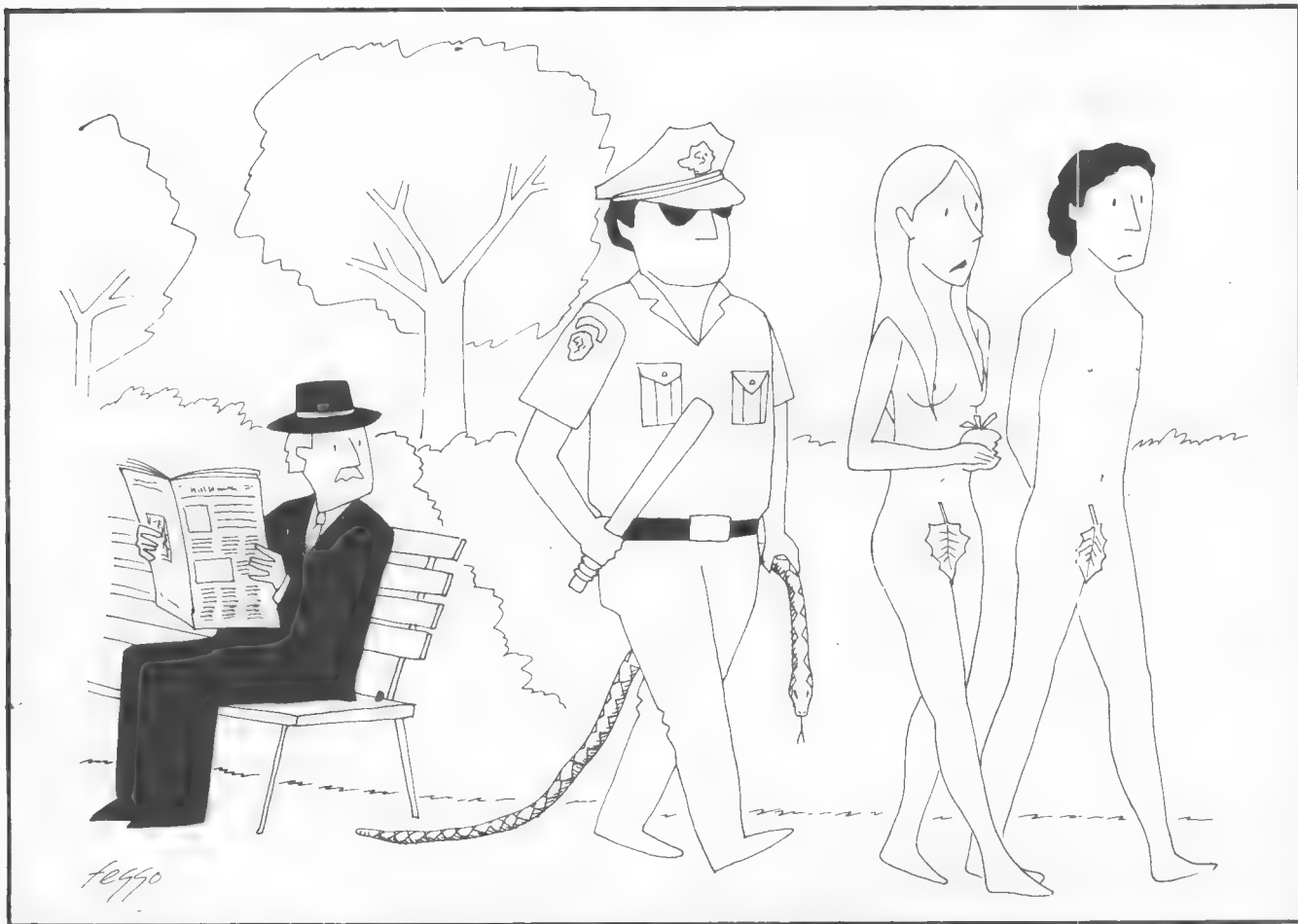
Laura doesn't notice the smell anymore. She kneels beside Daniel's body.

"Please, Laurie, do as your father says. Put the beam back."

But Laura doesn't hear them. Or the cracking above her. She just kneels there, staring at Daniel's hand and waiting for it all to fall down. **17**

BEYOND THE ZONE...

The Way-Out World of Feggo



Felipe Galindo

Books

(continued from page 11)

way to the end Baker produces some memorable set pieces. This is the sort of book, full of lurid colors, bold excesses, and galloping archetypes that one kept waiting for—in vain—from Roger Zelazny. When he is not just treading water, Baker can create descriptions of telepathic karate as pyrotechnical (and visceral) as the great mind-over-matter battle at the end of Cronenberg's masterful *Scanners*.

Nightchild is certifiably sf, being set in the far future on a distant planet and furnished with spaceships, aliens, and humans evolving toward a Stapletonian omnipotence, but it is, even so, a novel of fantasy—or, more strictly speaking, a fantasia, after the manner of Zelazny, in which the elements of an existing mythological system are metempsychosed into science-fictional equivalents. The mythology in this case is tantric yoga, which is less a narrative mythology than a kind of eldritch

physiology. This is Carlos Castaneda territory, and Baker traverses it expertly.

The Timescape paperback version (one of the last, alas, of that noble but now terminated series) has been substantially revised from the hardcover edition published by Berkley in 1979. I'm told that the revisions represent a considerable improvement, so you would do well to read the paperback, and to shrink-wrap the hardcover against the day that it becomes a collector's item—as, given Baker's energy and talent, it surely will.

Apropos collector's items, I will maintain the decibel level of my applause for one more book—Michael Bishop's second collection of short stories from Arkham House, *One Winter in Eden* (\$13.95). Having won his second Nebula last year for his novel, *No Enemy But Time* (reviewed here in the issue of June, 1982) and being widely regarded as the most accomplished of the young (under forty) writers in the field, Bishop

probably needs no introduction, and if he does, I may not be the right person to offer it as a reviewer—since I've already provided one for the published book. Still, I can't resist noting that *One Winter in Eden* contains Bishop's first Nebula winner, "The Quickening," and that in another story Bishop has scored a bull's-eye in the category of Unlikely Prediction Come True. In "Saving Face," Bishop hypothesizes a law requiring people who inadvertently resemble celebrities to have their faces altered by plastic surgery by way of safeguarding the celebrities' proprietary interest in their features. Recently, as you may have read in the paper, Jackie O was able to get an injunction forcing her look-alike to desist from working as a model. Obviously, compulsory plastic surgery will be with us soon!

Finally, I'd like to note—though I may not review—two novels of the supernatural that have recently been published: my own *The Businessman: a Tale of Terror* (Harper & Row, \$13.95) and *The Ceremonies* by TZ's editor, T.E.D. Klein (Viking, \$16.95). **17**

AMERICA'S QUEEN OF
SUPERNATURAL HORROR
WAS AN OVERWEIGHT FACULTY
WIFE WITH A KNACK FOR
MAKING READERS MAD.

The Haunted Mind of Shirley Jackson

by Jack Sullivan



Photo: © 1994 by The New York Public Library

Shirley Jackson once described herself as the only practicing witch in New England. The reader can take this statement literally or in the playful spirit that characterizes most of her statements about herself. It is certainly true that Jackson dabbled in the occult and that she owned over five hundred books on the subject. The poet Howard Nemerov says that on one occasion Jackson told him to leave her home after he had criticized an essay written by her husband, Stanley Edgar Hyman; she was afraid he would lose Hyman's chances of selling the piece to *The New Yorker*.

But Jackson's real witchcraft is her fiction. If witchcraft is defined as transforming ordinary materials into magic, then Jackson's stories and novels would indeed convict her as a practicing witch. As is illustrated by her running little story "One Ordinary Day, With Peanuts," her witchery is potent enough to make the ordinary extraordinary in just a few pages. Her longer works, especially the classic spooky novel, *The Hunting of Hill House*, and the diabolical depiction of madness, *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, are major masterpieces in the literature of the macabre. Stephen King pays homage to her in the dedication to *Fur-*

starter: "In memory of Shirley Jackson, who never needed to raise her voice."

Jackson's tragically brief life was devoted to writing books and raising a family (the latter activity is delightfully documented in *Life Among the Savages and Raising Demons*). She learned to discipline her writing habits when she dropped out of college for a year, training herself to produce at least one thousand words a day. When she enrolled at Syracuse University in 1937, she was ready to be a professional writer; she quickly published "Janice," a brief, tightly written tour-de-force about a suicidal road, a story that forecast her lifelong preoccupation with mental suffering. Her most important lesson as a writer was learned in the class of Leonard Brown, to whom she later dedicated *The Hunting of Hill House*. Brown taught her that the purpose of writing was "to get down what you wanted to say, not to gesticulate or impress," and the tautness and pared-down precision of everything Jackson wrote is a testimony to his teaching.

In 1940, following her graduation, Jackson married Stanley Edgar Hyman, the literary critic with whom she began to share increasingly large spaces in *The New Yorker*. The eleventh story

Jackson published in *The New Yorker* was "The Lottery" (1948); it made her instantly famous. A deluge of hate mail and canceled *New Yorker* subscriptions followed the publication of this now-classic tale, which depicts an annual human sacrifice in a typical all-American village—one not unlike Bennington, Vermont, Jackson's home. Brilliantly understated, "The Lottery" depicts the annual stoning as a "civic activity," like the square dance and the teen club; the lottery always begins at ten, like church, so folks will have time to make it home for dinner at noon.

The mail precipitated by this story was remarkable. Readers demanded to know "the locale and year of the custom" and whether they could go and watch; they denounced Jackson as "un-American," "perverted," and "modern" (this from readers of *The New Yorker*; one can only wonder what kind of mail would have poured in had the story appeared in *Reader's Digest* or *The Saturday Evening Post*). Judging from these letters, Jackson wrote in "Biography of a Story," people who read stories are gullible, rude, frequently illiterate, and horribly afraid of being laughed at. Many of the writers were positive that *The New*

The Haunted Mind of Shirley Jackson

Yorker was going to ridicule them in print, and the most cautious letters were headed, in capital letters: NOT FOR PUBLICATION or PLEASE DO NOT PRINT THIS LETTER, or, at best, THIS LETTER MAY BE PUBLISHED AT YOUR USUAL RATES OF PAYMENT." (Anyone who thinks that American standards of literacy and verbal sophistication have only recently declined should perhaps think again.) One of the few nice letters came from a man whose name Jackson knew she had seen somewhere in print. Assuming he must be a writer, she wrote back, "Thank you very much for your kind letter about my story. I admire your work too." Later, she found out he had been accused of murdering his wife with an axe.

"The Lottery" is Jackson's most sensational story. The rest of her short fiction, much of which is undeservedly obscure, is usually disturbing in quieter, more interior ways. Her work became increasingly more open-ended and ambiguous, not only in its implications, but in its plotting. "The Phantom Lover," for example, was originally about a woman being jilted on her wedding day by a cad named James Harris. In the revised version, "The Daemon Lover" (from *The Lottery, or the Adventures of James Harris*, 1949), Harris becomes an invisible tormentor who may be a "daemon lover" from the nether regions—or possibly a figment of the frantic heroine's imagination.

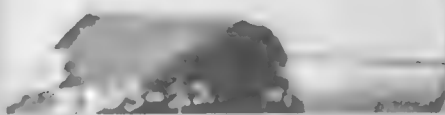
Many of Jackson's most haunting and exquisite tales can be found in *Come Along With Me* (1969), an anthology put together by Hyman after his wife's death. Jackson's sinister villagers rear their ugly heads again in "The Summer People," the story of an elderly couple who overstay their welcome in a remote summer cottage and gradually discover their food supply dwindling, their phone line cut, and their car nonfunctional. Huddled together in fear during a thunderstorm at the end, they're waiting for the hostile, inbred villagers to do their worst—but the story simply stops there, leaving the reader to decide whether they're the victims of a murderous plot or merely paranoid.

Many of the stories in *Come Along With Me* present Jackson's specialty: the dovetailing of mental aberration with the supernatural, so that the two become virtually interchangeable. In "The Beautiful Stranger," the heroine hates her husband and marriage so much that when he returns from a Boston business trip, she ex-

periences a moment of terror, then surging relief, when she envisions him as being not her husband but someone who almost looks like him. Her most horrible fear is that some day he will come back in the door and be her husband again. Our first inclination is to think she is going mad; by the end of the tale, she is literally lost from reality, unable to find her own doorstep, seeing "only the houses going in rows, with more rows beyond them and more rows beyond that, and somewhere a house which was hers, with the beautiful stranger inside, and she lost out here." Yes, she seems mad enough, yet a casual remark made by her husband earlier in the story makes us pause and shudder: "Someone told me today," he said once, "that he had heard I was back from Boston, and I distinctly thought he said that he heard I was dead in Boston." Is it possible that he is a stranger—a ghost, a changeling—after all?

M.R. James once said that a supernatural tale should leave a narrow "loophole" for a natural explanation. These powerful stories about mental anguish work in the opposite way, leaving a loophole for a supernatural explanation. The disoriented, lonely old lady in "The Bus," finding herself in a strange house after being tossed out in the rainy night by a sadistic bus driver, is clearly regressing to childhood when she sees living toys coming out of the closet: "The doll returned, looking widely at her, smile painted on. The red lips opened and the doll quacked, outrageously, a flat slapping voice coming out of that fair mouth. 'Go away, old lady,' the doll said, 'go away, old lady, go away.' The snake flung its eyeless head viciously at her ankles." This appears to be one of Jackson's more harrowing hallucination scenes, yet at its climax the heroine is awakened by the bus driver, thrown off the bus in the night, and the nightmare begins again, as if she may be caught in a circle more vicious than madness.

The "circle" so many of Jackson's characters find themselves in is often a mysterious form of death. In "The Visit," Jackson's most lyrical and poetic ghost story (dedicated, appropriately enough, to Dylan Thomas), the young heroine, while visiting the creepy old house of her friend from school, is embroiled by her friend's mother into the house's endless and "bewitching" tapestries within tapestries—suggesting that she will be forever trapped there,



like the ghostly old lady in the tower who has her name and whom only she sees. In "The Rock," a subtle horror tale inexplicably scrapped by Jackson and resurrected by Hyman in *Come Along With Me*, death is personified by a Mr. Johnson, a short, timid gentleman who looms increasingly large as the doomed heroine begins to fathom who he is. Mr. Johnson had originally come for the heroine's sister-in-law, but the latter inconvenienced him by arriving late: "It had to be one or the other of you, you see," says Mr. Johnson, who is seen only by the heroine. "I told you I was waiting for your sister-in-law, but you would come first. It was your decision, you know; I would have been satisfied with either." The immediate future of the heroine's health is left for the reader to ponder.

The radical inconclusiveness of



Julie Harris and Claire Bloom in 1963's *The Haunting*, directed by Robert Wise and based on *The Haunting of Hill House*: adult, intelligent, and easily the most frightening movie of its kind.

Jackson's stories is taken a step further in *The Sundial* (1958), her first supernatural novel, the story of a deranged family boarding themselves up in an old house to await the end of the world. Although frequently comic, *The Sundial* projects Jackson's vision of life and death at its bleakest:

... in the concept of everlasting life Mr. Halloran could not believe, since he was dying. His own life showed no signs of continuing beyond a hideously limited interval, and the only evidence he ever saw of everlasting life was in those luckier ones around him who continued young and would stay so after he was dead. Not-dying from day to day was as much as Mr. Halloran could be fairly expected to believe in; the rest of them believed in what they could—power, perhaps, or the comforting effects of gin, or money.

Full of splendidly imaginative gothic scenes—including a moving statue, an otherworldly snake "full of light," and numerous other apocalyptic portents—*The Sundial* gets under way when Aunt Fanny, one of the loonier members of the Halloran household, is accosted near a sundial by her father's ghost, who warns that "there will be black fire and red water, and the earth turning and screaming; this will come." The most terrifying scene, however, has nothing to do with the supernatural, but involves a teenage girl who finds herself trapped in a cab with one of the most unpleasant of all Jackson's psychotic country folk:

"Another five miles, maybe. Then another seven, eight miles to the city. They call it fog pass," he added, as one explaining something uniquely reasonable.

When Julia was silent again he went on. "Caught a rabbit up there once. It got so mixed up in the fog it didn't see me coming. Stood right there on the road watching me like it didn't know what I was. Ran smack over it with the car."

Julia turned slightly and let the wind drive the rain against her face. "Funny thing about rabbits," he said. "Most people think they're lucky. That one wasn't lucky," and he laughed. He had clearly reached a subject very dear to his heart, because he went on contentedly, "Killed some kittens once, my old lady had a cat always having kittens and this time I told her I'd get rid of the things for her. Cut off their heads with my pocket knife."

Julia, thinking, I will go to the biggest lightest hotel and telephone my mother, was silent.

By the end of this scary, eccentric, utterly unpredictable novel, we suspect

The Haunted Mind of Shirley Jackson

the characters, who have boarded themselves up during a storm that they think represents the end of the world, to be the victims of mass hysteria. And yet the weather *has* turned unaccountably freakish and dark, and numerous other prophecies have come to pass. Could the certifiably insane Aunt Fanny be right after all? We never know, because the novel grinds to an abrupt, frustrating halt. What we are left with, which is considerable, is a series of slightly crazed, beautifully sketched scenes, such as the Jackson version of the apocalypse:

A woman in Chicago was arrested for leading a polar bear clipped like a French poodle into a large downtown department store. A man in Texas won a divorce from his wife because she tore out the last chapter of every mystery story he borrowed from the library. A television set in Florida refused to let itself be turned off; until its owners took an axe to it, it continued on or off, presenting inferior music and stale movies and endless, maddening advertising, and even under the axe, with its last sigh, it died with the praises of a hair tonic on its lips.

For Jackson, the apocalypse is the final triumph of stupidity and vulgarity.

The Sundial was followed by *The Haunting of Hill House*, which opens and closes with one of the most shuddery haunted house descriptions in literature:

No live organism can continue for long to exist under conditions of absolute reality; even larks and katydids are supposed, by some, to dream. Hill House, not sane, stood by itself against the hills, holding darkness within; it had stood so for eighty years and might stand for eighty more. Within, walls continued upright, bricks met neatly, floors were firm, and doors were sensibly shut; silence lay steadily against the wood and stone of Hill House, and whatever walked there, walked alone.

The most vividly alive house since the House of Usher, Hill House is the perfect habitat not only for the novel's superbly evoked ghosts—who weep, chuckle, and produce awesome booming noises in the night—but for Eleanor Vance, the quintessential Jackson heroine, whose life is succinctly summed up in a few desolate sentences: "Eleanor Vance was thirty-two years old when she came to Hill House. The only person in the world she genuinely hated,

now that her mother was dead, was her sister. She disliked her brother-in-law and her five-year-old niece, and she had no friends."

Eleanor's lonely, empty life has been a process of "waiting for something like Hill House," which she enters along with three other characters as part of a psychic investigation. Hill House is waiting for her too, and her crumbling mental state is so deftly welded to the novel's supernatural episodes that the question of whether she is hallucinating becomes irrelevant, especially since (as we have seen in the opening) Hill House is most hellishly alive during moments of omniscient narration.

Jackson's tight writing is one of the qualities which makes *Hill House* succeed where so many other supernatural novels fail. The other is her irrepressibly macabre sense of humor. In the obligatory ghost story within the story, the droll psychic Doctor tells the group how the former inhabitant met her ghastly end: "Gossip says she hanged herself from the turret on the tower, but when you have a house like Hill House with a tower and a turret, gossip would hardly allow you to hang yourself anywhere else." Later, another character comments, "For myself, I probably would have anchored the rope onto the deer head in the game room, but I suppose she had some sentimental attachment to the tower; what a nice word 'attachment' is in that context, don't you think?"

Jackson's last completed novel was the National Book Award winner *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* (soon to be a feature film), narrated in the first person by Merricat Blackwood, a homicidal teenage psychotic who views her private world as the "moon" and the outer world as a ruin inhabited by demons and ghosts. In *Hangsaman* (1951) and *The Bird's Nest* (1954), as well as in numerous stories, Jackson had demonstrated her mastery at depicting psychological breakdown; in *Castle*, madness becomes a kind of haunted poetry:

I used leaves and branches for a bed, and Constance had given me a blanket. The trees around and overhead were so thick that it was always dry inside and on Sunday morning I lay there with Jonas, listening to his stories. All cat stories start with the statement: "My mother, who was the first cat, told me this," and I lay with my head close to Jonas and listened. There was no change coming, I thought here,

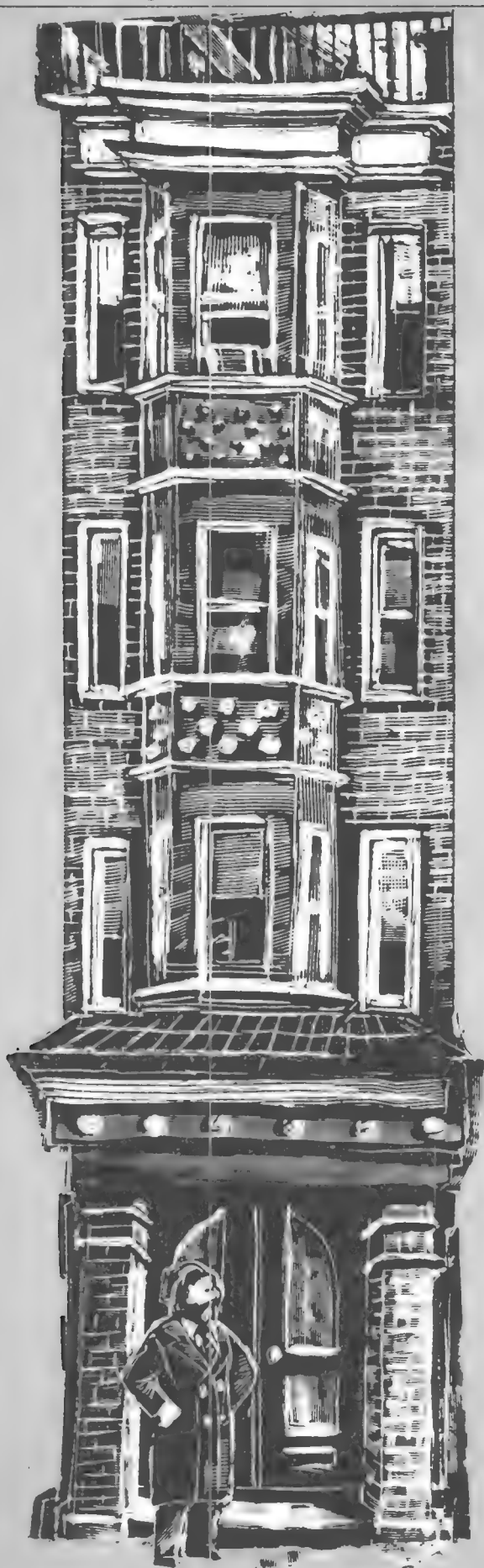
only spring; I was wrong to be frightened. Jonas went on and on ("And then we sang! And then we sang!") and the leaves moved overhead and it would always be the same.

Not since Arthur Machen's "The White People" (also narrated by a young girl) had there been anything quite like this. Jackson was always an economical writer, but here her language has such limpid simplicity that her usual themes—insanity, loneliness, cruelty, the ordinary turning extraordinary—emerge with startling music and clarity. The grim, hateful villagers (almost obligatory in Jackson by now) come to life in a few incisive strokes:

In the village the men stayed young and did the gossiping and the women aged with grey evil weariness and stood silently waiting for the men to get up and come home. . . . I always stood perfectly straight and stiff when the children came close, because I was afraid of them. I was afraid that they might touch me and the mothers would come at me like a flock of taloned hawks; that was always the picture I had in my mind—birds descending, striking, gashing with razor claws.

By the time the villagers have gone on their rampage against the Blackwood house, they seem the source of madness and horror, not Merricat. Jackson's insidious, magical prose draws us irresistably into Merricat's psyche, making us forget that she has murdered her family. At the end, peering out of the burned-out, vine-shrouded "tomb" that was once her house, she declares herself to be "happy"—the only Jackson character to do so. Her sister Constance, who is gradually seduced, like the reader, into Merricat's world, is "happy" at the end, too. "I told you that you would like it on the moon," Merricat says.

Jackson never completed another novel. Extremely obese at the end, she died suddenly of a heart attack at age forty-five in 1965, leaving behind some of the most perfectly crafted novels and stories in the literature of the macabre. Ironically, her heart attack came just as she was finally, with the help of a psychiatrist, making significant progress in overcoming her longstanding bouts of anxiety and depression. Her end was eerily forecast in "The Rock," where the heroine, after overcoming a "great despair," is visited "swiftly and silently" by one of Shirley Jackson's favorite characters, death. 17



One Ordinary Day, With Peanuts

by Shirley Jackson

IT WAS A MISERABLE JOB,
BUT SOMEBODY HAD TO DO IT!

Mr. John Philip Johnson shut his front door behind him and came down his front steps into the bright morning with a feeling that all was well with the world on this best of all days, and wasn't the sun warm and good, and didn't his shoes feel comfortable after the resoling, and he knew that he had undoubtedly chosen the precise very tie which belonged with the day and the sun and his comfortable feet, and, after all, wasn't the world just a wonderful place? In spite of the fact that he was a small man, and the tie was perhaps a shade vivid, Mr. Johnson irradiated this feeling of well-being as he came down the steps and onto the dirty sidewalk, and he smiled at people who passed him, and some of them even smiled back. He stopped at the newsstand on the corner and bought his paper, saying "Good morning" with real conviction to the man who sold him the paper and the two or three other people who were lucky enough to be buying papers when Mr. Johnson skipped up. He remembered to fill his pockets with candy and peanuts, and then he set out to get himself uptown. He stopped in a flower shop and bought a carnation for his buttonhole, and stopped almost immediately afterward to give the carnation to a small child in a carriage, who looked at him dumbly, and then smiled, and Mr. Johnson smiled, and the child's mother looked at Mr. Johnson for a minute and then smiled too.

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One Ordinary Day With Peanuts

When he had gone several blocks uptown, Mr. Johnson cut across the avenue and went along a side street, chosen at random; he did not follow the same route every morning, but preferred to pursue his eventful way in wide detours, more like a puppy than a man intent upon business. It happened this morning that halfway down the block a moving van was parked, and the furniture from an upstairs apartment stood half on the sidewalk, half on the steps, while an amused group of people loitered, examining the scratches on the tables and the worn spots on the chairs, and a harassed woman, trying to watch a young child and the movers and the furniture all at the same time, gave the clear impression of endeavoring to shelter her private life from the people staring at her belongings. Mr. Johnson stopped, and for a moment joined the crowd, and then he came forward and, touching his hat civilly, said, "Perhaps I can keep an eye on your little boy for you?"

The woman turned and glared at him distrustfully, and Mr. Johnson added hastily, "We'll sit right here on the steps." He beckoned to the little boy, who hesitated and then responded agreeably to Mr. Johnson's genial smile. Mr. Johnson brought out a handful of peanuts from his pocket and sat on the steps with the boy, who at first refused the peanuts on the grounds that his mother did not allow him to accept food from strangers; Mr. Johnson said that probably his mother had not intended peanuts to be included, since elephants at the circus ate them, and the boy considered, and then agreed solemnly. They sat on the steps cracking peanuts in a comradely fashion, and Mr. Johnson said, "So you're moving?"

"Yep," said the boy.

"Where you going?"

"Vermont."

"Nice place. Plenty of snow there. Maple sugar, too; you like maple sugar?"

"Sure."

"Plenty of maple sugar in Vermont. You going to live on a farm?"

"Going to live with Grandpa."

"Grandpa like peanuts?"

"Sure."

"Ought to take him some," said Mr. Johnson,

reaching into his pocket. "Just you and Mommy going?"

"Yep."

"Tell you what," Mr. Johnson said. "You take some peanuts to eat on the train."

The boy's mother, after glancing at them frequently, had seemingly decided that Mr. Johnson was trustworthy, because she had devoted herself wholeheartedly to seeing that the movers did not—what movers rarely do, but every housewife believes they will—crack a leg from her good table, or set a kitchen chair down on a lamp. Most of the furniture was loaded by now, and she was deep in the nervous stage when she knew there was something she had forgotten to pack—hidden away in the back of a closet somewhere, or left at a neighbor's and forgotten, or on the clothesline—and was trying to remember under stress what it was.

"This all, lady?" the chief mover said, completing her dismay.

Uncertainly, she nodded.

"Want to go on the truck with the furniture, sonny?" the mover asked the boy, and laughed. The boy laughed too and said to Mr. Johnson, "I guess I'll have a good time at Vermont."

"Fine time," said Mr. Johnson, and stood up. "Have one more peanut before you go," he said to the boy.

The boy's mother said to Mr. Johnson, "Thank you so much; it was a great help to me."

"Nothing at all," said Mr. Johnson gallantly. "Where in Vermont are you going?"

The mother looked at the little boy accusingly, as though he had given away a secret of some importance, and said unwillingly, "Greenwich."

"Lovely town," said Mr. Johnson. He took out a card, and wrote a name on the back. "Very good friend of mine lives in Greenwich," he said. "Call on him for anything you need. His wife makes the best doughnuts in town," he added soberly to the little boy.

"Swell," said the little boy.

"Goodbye," said Mr. Johnson.

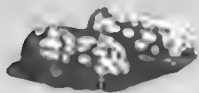
He went on, stepping happily with his new-shod feet, feeling the warm sun on his back and on the top of his head. Halfway down the block he met



"You like
adventure?
Mystery?
Like surprises?
Unusual and
exciting events?"



"You selling
something?"



"Sure," said
Mr. Johnson.
"You want to
take a chance?"

a stray dog and fed him a peanut.

At the corner, where another wide avenue faced him, Mr. Johnson decided to go on uptown again. Moving with comparative laziness, he was passed on either side by people hurrying and frowning, and people brushed past him going the other way, clattering along to get somewhere quickly. Mr. Johnson stopped on every corner and waited patiently for the light to change, and he stepped out of the way of anyone who seemed to be in any particular hurry, but one young lady came too fast for him, and crashed wildly into him when he stooped to pat a kitten which had run out onto the sidewalk from an apartment house and was now unable to get back through the rushing feet.

"Excuse me," said the young lady, trying fran-

tically to pick up Mr. Johnson and hurry on at the same time, "terribly sorry."

The kitten, regardless now of danger, raced back to its home. "Perfectly all right," said Mr. Johnson, adjusting himself carefully. "You seem to be in a hurry."

"Of course I'm in a hurry," said the young lady. "I'm late."

She was extremely cross and the frown between her eyes seemed well on its way to becoming permanent. She had obviously awakened late, because she had not spent any extra time in making herself look pretty, and her dress was plain and unadorned with collar or brooch, and her lipstick was noticeably crooked. She tried to brush past Mr. Johnson, but, risking her suspicious displeasure, he took her arm and said, "Please wait."

"Look," she said ominously, "I ran into you and your lawyer can see my lawyer and I will gladly pay all damages and all inconveniences suffered therefrom but please this minute let me go because I am late."

"Late for what?" said Mr. Johnson; he tried his winning smile on her but it did no more than keep her, he suspected, from knocking him down again.

"Late for work," she said between her teeth. "Late for my employment. I have a job and if I am late I lose exactly so much an hour and I cannot really afford what your pleasant conversation is costing me, be it ever so pleasant."

"I'll pay for it," said Mr. Johnson. Now these were magic words, not necessarily because they were true, or because she seriously expected Mr. Johnson to pay for anything, but because Mr. Johnson's flat statement, obviously innocent of irony, could not be coming from Mr. Johnson, anything but the statement of a responsible and truthful and respectable man.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"I said that since I am obviously responsible for your being late I shall certainly pay for it."

"Don't be silly," she said, and for the first time the frown disappeared. "I wouldn't expect you to pay for anything—a few minutes ago I was offering to pay you. Anyway," she added, almost smiling, "it was my fault."

"What happens if you don't go to work?"

She stared. "I don't get paid."

"Precisely," said Mr. Johnson.

"What do you mean, precisely? If I don't show up at the office exactly twenty minutes ago I lose a dollar and twenty cents an hour, or two cents a minute or—" She thought. "Almost a dime for the time I've spent talking to you."

Mr. Johnson laughed, and finally she laughed, too. "You're late already," he pointed out. "Will you give me another four cents worth?"

"I don't understand why."

One Ordinary Day With Peanuts

"You'll see," Mr. Johnson promised. He led her over to the side of the walk, next to the buildings, and said, "Stand here," and went out into the rush of people going both ways. Selecting and considering, as one who must make a choice involving perhaps whole years of lives, he estimated the people going by. Once he almost moved, and then at the last minute thought better of it and drew back. Finally, from half a block away, he saw what he wanted, and moved out into the center of the traffic to intercept a young man, who was hurrying, and dressed as though he had awakened late, and frowning.

"Oof," said the young man, because Mr. Johnson had thought of no better way to intercept anyone than the one the young woman had unwittingly used upon him. "Where do you think you're going?" the young man demanded from the sidewalk.

"I want to speak to you," said Mr. Johnson ominously.

The young man got up nervously, dusting himself and eyeing Mr. Johnson. "What for?" he said. "What'd I do?"

"That's what bothers me most about people nowadays," Mr. Johnson complained broadly to the people passing. "No matter whether they've done anything or not, they always figure someone's after them. About what you're going to do," he told the young man.

"Listen," said the young man, trying to brush past him, "I'm late, and I don't have any time to listen. Here's a dime, now get going."

"Thank you," said Mr. Johnson, pocketing the dime. "Look," he said, "what happens if you stop running?"

"I'm late," said the young man, still trying to get past Mr. Johnson, who was unexpectedly clinging.

"How much you make an hour?" Mr. Johnson demanded.

"A communist, are you?" said the young man. "Now will you please let me—"

"No," said Mr. Johnson insistently, "how much?"

"Dollar fifty," said the young man. "And now will you—"

"You like adventure?"

The young man stared, and, staring, found himself caught and held by Mr. Johnson's genial smile; he almost smiled back and then repressed it and made an effort to tear away. "I got to hurry," he said.

"Mystery? Like surprises? Unusual and exciting events?"

"You selling something?"

"Sure," said Mr. Johnson. "You want to take a chance?"

The young man hesitated, looked longingly up the avenue toward what might have been his

destination and then, when Mr. Johnson said "I'll pay for it" with his own peculiar convincing emphasis, turned and said, "Well, okay. But I got to see it first, what I'm buying."

Mr. Johnson, breathing hard, led the young man over to the side where the girl was standing; she had been watching with interest Mr. Johnson's capture of the young man and now, smiling timidly, she looked at Mr. Johnson as though prepared to be surprised at nothing.

Mr. Johnson reached into his pocket and took out his wallet. "Here," he said, and handed a bill to the girl. "This about equals your day's pay."

"But no," she said, surprised in spite of herself. "I mean, I couldn't."

"Please do not interrupt," Mr. Johnson told her. "And here," he said to the young man, "this will take care of you." The young man accepted the bill dazedly, but said, "Probably counterfeit" to the young woman out of the side of his mouth. "Now," Mr. Johnson went on, disregarding the young man, "what is your name, Miss?"

"Kent," she said helplessly. "Mildred Kent."

"Fine," said Mr. Johnson. "And you, sir?"

"Arthur Adams," said the young man stiffly.

"Splendid," said Mr. Johnson. "Now, Miss Kent, I would like you to meet Mr. Adams. Mr. Adams, Miss Kent."

Miss Kent stared, wet her lips nervously, made a gesture as though she might run, and said, "How do you do?"

Mr. Adams straightened his shoulders, scowled at Mr. Johnson, made a gesture as though he might run, and said, "How do you do?"

"Now this," said Mr. Johnson, taking several bills from his wallet, "should be enough for the day for both of you. I would suggest, perhaps, Coney Island—although I personally am not fond of the place—or perhaps a nice lunch somewhere, and dancing, or a matinee, or even a movie, although take care to choose a really good one; there are so many bad movies these days. You might," he said, struck with an inspiration, "visit the Bronx Zoo, or the Planetarium. Anywhere, as a matter of fact," he concluded, "that you would like to go. Have a nice time."

As he started to move away Arthur Adams, breaking from his dumbfounded stare, said, "But see here, Mister, you can't do this. Why—how do you know—I mean, we don't even know—I mean, how do you know we won't just take the money and not do what you said?"

"You've taken the money," Mr. Johnson said. "You don't have to follow any of my suggestions. You may know something you prefer to do—perhaps a museum, or something."

"But suppose I just run away with it and leave her here?"

"I know you won't," said Mr. Johnson gently,

"because you remembered to ask me that. Goodbye," he added, and went on.

As he stepped up the street, conscious of the sun on his head and his good shoes, he heard from somewhere behind him the young man saying, "Look, you know you don't have to if you don't want to," and the girl saying, "But unless you don't want to..." Mr. Johnson smiled to himself and then thought that he had better hurry along; when he wanted to he could move very quickly, and before the young woman had gotten around to saying, "Well, I will if you will," Mr. Johnson was several blocks away and had already stopped twice, once to help a lady lift several large packages into a taxi and once to hand a peanut to a seagull. By this time he was in an area of large stores and many more people and he was buffeted constantly from either side by people hurrying and cross and late and sullen. Once he offered a peanut to a man who asked him for a

dime, and once he offered a peanut to a bus driver who had stopped his bus at an intersection and had opened the window next to his seat and put his head as though longing for fresh air and the comparative quiet of the traffic. The man wanting a dime took the peanut because Mr. Johnson had wrapped a dollar bill around it, but the bus driver took the peanut and asked ironically, "You want a transfer, Jack?"

On a busy corner Mr. Johnson encountered two young people—for one minute he thought they might be Mildred Kent and Arthur Adams—who were eagerly scanning a newspaper; their backs pressed against a storefront to avoid the people passing, their heads bent together. Mr. Johnson, whose curiosity was insatiable, leaned onto the storefront next to them and peeked over the man's shoulder; they were scanning the "Apartments Vacant" columns.

Mr. Johnson remembered the street where the woman and her little boy were going to Vermont and he tapped the man on the shoulder and said amiably, "Try down on West Seventeen. About the middle of the block, people moved out this morning."

"Say, what do you—" said the man, and then, seeing Mr. Johnson clearly, "Well, thanks. Where did you say?"

"West Seventeen," said Mr. Johnson. "About the middle of the block." He smiled again and said, "Good luck."

"Thanks," said the man.

"Thanks," said the girl, as they moved off.

"Goodbye," said Mr. Johnson.

He lunched alone in a pleasant restaurant, where the food was rich, and only Mr. Johnson's excellent digestion could encompass two of their whipped-cream-and-chocolate-and-rum-cake pastries for dessert. He had three cups of coffee, tipped the waiter largely, and went out into the street again into the wonderful sunlight; his shoes still comfortable and fresh on his feet. Outside he found a beggar staring in the windows of the restaurant he had left and, carefully looking through the money in his pocket, Mr. Johnson approached the beggar and pressed some coins and a couple of bills into his hand. "It's the price of the veal cutlet lunch plus tip," said Mr. Johnson. "Goodbye."

After his lunch he rested; he walked into the nearest park and fed peanuts to the pigeons. It was late afternoon by the time he was ready to start back downtown, and he had refereed two checker games and watched a small boy and girl whose mother had fallen asleep and awakened with surprise and fear which turned to amusement when she saw Mr. Johnson. He had given away almost all of his candy, and had fed all the rest of his peanuts to the pigeons, and it was time to go home. Although the late afternoon sun was pleasant, and his shoes were



One Ordinary Day With Peanuts

still entirely comfortable, he decided to take a taxi downtown.

He had a difficult time catching a taxi, because he gave up the first three or four empty ones to people who seemed to need them more; finally, however, he stood alone on the corner and—almost like netting a frisky fish—he hailed desperately until he succeeded in catching a cab which had been proceeding with haste uptown and seemed to draw in toward Mr. Johnson against its own will.

"Mister," the cab driver said as Mr. Johnson climbed in, "I figured you was an omen, like. I wasn't going to pick you up at all."

"Kind of you," said Mr. Johnson ambiguously.

"If I'd of let you go it would of cost me ten bucks," said the driver.

"Really?" said Mr. Johnson.

"Yeah," said the driver. "Guy just got out of the cab, he turned around and give me ten bucks, said take this and bet it in a hurry on a horse named Vulcan, right away."

"Vulcan?" said Mr. Johnson, horrified. "A fire sign on a Wednesday?"

"What?" said the driver. "Anyway, I said to myself if I got no fare between here and there I'd bet ten, but if anyone looked like they needed the cab I'd take it as a omen and I'd take the ten home to the wife."

"You were very right," said Mr. Johnson heartily. "This is Wednesday, you would have lost your money. Monday, yes, or even Saturday. But never never never a fire sign on a Wednesday. Sunday would have been good, now."

"Vulcan don't run on Sunday," said the driver.

"You wait till another day," said Mr. Johnson. "Down this street, please, driver. I'll get off on the next corner."

"He told me Vulcan, though," said the driver.



"I'll tell you," said Mr. Johnson, hesitating with the door of the cab half open. "You take that ten dollars and I'll give you another ten dollars to go with it, and you go right ahead and bet that money on any Thursday on any horse that has a name indicating let me see, Thursday well, grain. Or any growing food."

"Grain?" said the driver. "You mean a horse named, like, Wheat or something?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Johnson. "Or, as a matter of fact, to make it even easier, any horse whose name includes the letters C, R, L. Perfectly simple."

"Tall corn?" said the driver, a light in his eye. "You mean a horse named, like, Tall Corn?"

"Absolutely," said Mr. Johnson. "Here's your money."

"Tall Corn," said the driver. "Thank you, Mister."

"Goodbye," said Mr. Johnson.

He was on his own corner and went straight up to his apartment. He let himself in and called "Hello?" and Mrs. Johnson answered from the kitchen, "Hello, dear, aren't you early?"

"Took a taxi home," Mr. Johnson said. "I remembered the cheesecake, too. What's for dinner?"

Mrs. Johnson came out of the kitchen and kissed him; she was a comfortable woman, and smiling as Mr. Johnson smiled. "Hard day?" she asked.

"Not very," said Mr. Johnson, hanging his coat in the closet. "How about you?"

"So-so," she said. She stood in the kitchen doorway while he settled into his easy chair and took off his good shoes and took out the paper he had bought that morning. "Here and there," she said.

"I didn't do so badly," Mr. Johnson said. "Couple young people."

"Fine," she said. "I had a little nap this afternoon, took it easy most of the day. Went into a department store this morning and accused the woman next to me of shoplifting, and had the store detective pick her up. Sent three dogs to the pound—you know, the usual thing. Oh, and listen," she added, remembering.

"What?" asked Mr. Johnson.

"Well," she said, "I got onto a bus and asked the driver for a transfer, and when he helped someone else first I said that he was impertinent, and quarreled with him. And then I said why wasn't he in the army, and I said it loud enough for everyone to hear, and I took his number and I turned in a complaint. Probably got him fired."

"Fine," said Mr. Johnson. "But you do look tired. Want to change over tomorrow?"

"I would like to," she said. "I could do with a change."

"Right," said Mr. Johnson. "What's for dinner?"

"Veal cutlet."

"Had it for lunch," said Mr. Johnson. 17

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MAY '81: Original fiction by Robert Silverberg, Joe Haldeman, Roger Zelazny, Spider Robinson, & others; Peter Straub interview; Tanith Lee novelette; classic Serling script, *The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street*; *Show-by-Show* #2; preview of *The Hand*. **JUNE:** Stephen King's new thriller, *The Jaunt*; Robert Bloch interview; two long-lost Anthony Boucher tales; Serling's *The After Hours*; 100 Years of Fantasy Illustration; *Outland* preview; *Show-by-Show Guide* #3. **JULY:** A dozen new tales by Robert Silverberg, Robert Sheckley, Ron Goulart, Charles L. Grant, Stanley Schmidt, & others; *Superman's* Richard Donner on directing *The Twilight Zone*; Serling's tv chiller, *The Eye of the Beholder*; *Show-by-Show* #4. **SEPTEMBER:** Richard Matheson interview; new fiction by John Sladek, Gary Brandner, & Parke Godwin; tv history, *Forerunners of 'The Twilight Zone'*; Serling classic, *Time Enough at Last*; Dr. Van Helsing on fear of ghosts; *Show-by-Show* #6. **NOVEMBER:** New tales by Tanith Lee, Thomas Disch, Ramsey Campbell, Stanley Schmidt, & Clark Howard; John Saul interview; TZ script, *Death's Head Revisited*; preview of *Halloween II*; Dr. Van Helsing on the joy of terror; *Show-by-Show* #8. **DECEMBER:** An outspoken interview with Harlan Ellison; *The Midnight Sun*, TZ classic script; M.R. James profile & James classic, *The Ash-Tree*; *Quest for Fire* preview; 8 new tales of humor & horror; *Show-by-Show* #9. **JANUARY '82:** Rod Serling recalls *My Most Memorable Christmas*; Frank Belknap Long recalls H.P. Lovecraft; *Ghost Story* preview; fiction by Robert Sheckley, Reginald Bretnor, Parke Godwin, Connie Willis, & John Morressy; *The Night of the Meek*, Santa in TZ classic; LeFanu profile & classic tale; *Show-by-Show* #10. **MARCH:** Fritz Leiber interview, plus Leiber classic; 8 new tales by Ron Goulart, Robert Vardeman, & others; on the set of *The Thing*; preview of *Stab*, with Roy Scheider & Meryl Streep; Serling's *A Passage for Trumpet*; *Show-by-Show* #12. **JUNE:** Richard Matheson's unseen TZ script, *The Doll*; Philip K. Dick interview; *Blade Runner* preview; *Fantasy in Clay* photo feature; 9 new tales by Pamela Sargent, Richard Christian Matheson, & others; *Show-by-Show* #15. **JULY:** Stories by Robert Silverberg, Joan Aiken, & Joe Lansdale; Stephen King on films, Thomas Disch on books; Robertson Davies interview & story; *Ghostly Britain* photos; preview of *The Thing*; Serling's 100

Yards Over the Rim; making *The Last Horror Film*; *Show-by-Show* #16. **AUGUST:** Poe & Robert Bloch together in *The Lighthouse*; Douglas Heyes, TZ director, interviewed; funhouse photo-tour; 7 new stories; a look at *Tron*, *Poltergeist*, and *E.T.*; Serling's *The Trade-Ins*; *Show-by-Show* #17. **SEPTEMBER:** Long-lost Serling radio script; previews of *Creepshow* and *Something Wicked*; Paul Schrader interview; special Arthur Machen section; 7 new tales; new horror quiz; *Show-by-Show* #18. **OCTOBER:** Nicholas Meyer interview on *Star Trek*; Ireland's ghostly mansions; tales by Avram Davidson and Robert Sheckley; Serling's *In Praise of Pip*; *Show-by-Show* #19. **DECEMBER:** *Living Doll*, Charles Beaumont's TZ classic; Ridley Scott interview; L. P. Hartley profile; *Xtro* preview; 8 new stories; *Show-by-Show* #21. **MARCH-APRIL '83:** Contest prizewinners; Serling's own *Twilight Zone* movie; Colin Wilson interview; *The Hunger* preview; TZ script & story by Richard Matheson; *Show-by-Show* #23. **JULY-AUGUST:** Special supernatural cat issue; 7 new stories; *Brainstorm* preview; H.P. Lovecraft interview; Serling's *Five Characters in Search of an Exit*; *Show-by-Show* #25. **SEPT.-OCT.:** Special Section, *Twilight Zone—The Movie*; 4 new tales; Fantasy Acrostic #2; Johnson's *Kick the Can*; final *Show-by-Show Guide* to tv's *Twilight Zone*. **NOV.-DEC.:** Stories by Thomas M. Disch, Ramsey Campbell, and 6 others; classic vignette by Fredric Brown; behind the scenes at *The Outer Limits*; David Cronenberg interview; previews of *Iceman* and *The Dead Zone*; Serling's *It's a Good Life*. **JAN.-FEB. '84:** Special issue featuring 1984 TZ pull-out calendar; Isaac Bashevis Singer profile & interview; fiction by Singer, John Carpenter, and 4 others; *Christine* preview; a chat with Stephen King; critical survey of 1983's fantasy films; Serling's *Mirror Image*; *Outer Limits Show-by-Show* #1. **MARCH-APRIL:** Contest prizewinners; new fiction by Richard Matheson, Lee Duigon, Jack C. Haldeman II, and others; Burgess Meredith interview; *Dreamscape* preview; *Twilight Zone* trivia quiz; Serling's *Mr. Dingle, The Strong*; *Outer Limits Show-by-Show* #2. **MAY-JUNE:** Stories by John Sladek, Andrew Weiner, & others; classic British horror; Ron Goulart on low-budget monster films; John Sayles interview; John Morressy's all-purpose fantasy quiz; films for 1984; Matheson's *Nightmare at 20,000 Feet*; *Outer Limits Show-by-Show* #3.



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THE OUTER LIMITS

And Now, a Word from Our Censor

by David J. Schow

The anemonelike Grippians from "Moonstone."

WHEN JOSEPH STEFANO SAID, 'THEY'RE WEIRD,' HE WASN'T REFERRING TO THE MONSTERS.

The way we turned out shows was staggering to the rest of the industry," says series creator Leslie Stevens. "I don't know whether we were the first independent production company, but we were among the first. Everybody else was studio-affiliated, with offices on the studio lot. They all wanted to know how we did it. How in the name of God could Daystar, a company with no sound stages, no equipment, nothing, deliver first-run, full-production, glossy, gorgeous stuff, with photography and casts better than theirs?"

Production miracles aside, the most salient characteristic of *The Outer Limits* was change—a perpetual flux beginning with the very first title of the very first show. Calling the series *Please Stand By* made ABC nervous, in light of the cold war paranoia of the early 1960s, and *Beyond Control* seemed too ripe a target for derisive critics. It was United Artists production ramrod Daniel Melnick who suggested the *Outer Limits* name; Stevens's pilot episode (also called "Please Stand By") was retitled "The Galaxy Being." But after a few more episodes, ABC, uncomfortable with both Daystar's weird, revolutionary approach to Hollywood tv production and the show's weirder slants and subject matter, soon coined another name for it: Melnick's Folly.

The program remained in flux throughout its stormy year-and-a-half run, from the most minuscule dialogue changes to the ultimate junking of most of the Daystar/Villa di Stefano production staff at the beginning of the

second season. Fresh footage was likely to be nipped and tucked at three a.m. in the editing rooms while producer Joseph Stefano stayed up all night cutting, padding, and revising script after script. Casting decisions, too, were often rethought, and episode titles were frequently replaced at the last minute. Thus "Ebon Struck First" became "Nightmare," "Cry of the Unborn" became "The Man Who Was Never Born," "Exchange Student" became "The Mice," "Natural Selection" became "Fun and Games," and "The Seamaness Drug" became "The Chameleon."

Some of the casting choices were intriguing. "I can't think of any actors who worked on *Outer Limits* just thinking of it as six days' work," says Stefano. "Some of them did the best work they'd ever done." The central role of the venal Judith Bellerio in "The Bellerio Shield," for example, was scripted by Stefano with actress Sally Kellerman in mind; in the episode she gives one of the finest performances of her limited career. "ZZZZZ," says Stefano, "was commissioned because of Joanna Frank. I had read her for 'The Man Who Was Never Born' and didn't like her for that, but there was something about her face I thought would photograph beautifully." The actress's stint as *Outer Limits*' bee-girl is probably her best-remembered role; she vanished after logging bits in several biker films (such as Richard Rush's *The Savage Seven*) and the unfunny 1969 Jack Arnold comedy *Hello Down There*. The female lead in "The Man Who Was Never Born" was picked up by Shirley Knight ("She was so

gorgeous she looked unreal," notes Stefano), who appeared recently in *Endless Love* and the minor horror classic *The Sender*.

Stefano also had a penchant for distinctive character actors for whom feature film work was dwindling by 1963. "John Hoyt did a beautiful job in 'The Bellerio Shield,'" he recalls, "as did George MacReady, with his wonderful scar, in *The Invisibles*." Neil Hamilton, soon to become Commissioner Gordon of the infamous *Batman* series, costarred with MacReady in the latter show. "Neil was great in *The Invisibles*," says Stefano. "It's a tight, tense show, and one of my favorites. These actors all had such fabulous faces and styles—the sort of thing you just couldn't get from the actors who were busy back then."

Some parts were notable for who did not play them. The Brandoesque role of Mike Benson in "Fun and Games" was offered to Clu Gulager, George Segal, and Rip Torn before being accepted by Nick Adams. Burt Reynolds turned down the role eventually played by Bruce Dern in "The Zanti Misfits," and no less than four other actresses—Diana Hyland, Salome Jens, Barbara Shelley, and Gena Rowlands—were considered for the pivotal role of the scheming Kassia Paine in Stefano's "Forms of Things Unknown" before *Psycho* alumna Vera Miles was picked. David McCallum got his shot at "The Sixth Finger" because the part of the superevolved Gwyllm Griffiths was nixed by leading man Gary Raymond (featured in the Charlton Heston epic *El Cid*), who told Daystar: "Oh,



Courtesy Darren Riley

Bill Hart of "Fun and Games" poses with script supervisor Hope McLachlin at MGM.

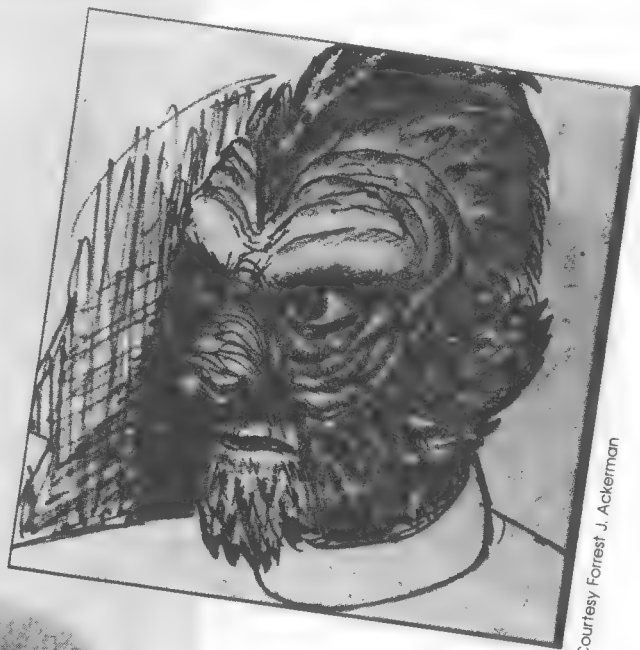
no, I can't do this—I'm a serious actor." (Instead, he went on to *Jason and the Argonauts* and ended up as a regular on tv's *Rat Patrol*.)

Other modifications on *The Outer Limits* were, not surprisingly, requested by the censors of ABC's Standards and Practices department, though some objections came from stranger sources. Stefano, for example, recalls suggesting Hari Rhodes for a small role in "Moonstone," whereupon one of the network's brain boys pointed out that Rhodes was black—"or, at that time, a Negro actor," says Stefano. What ruffled ABC was that he'd proposed Rhodes for a part "not specifically written for a black actor. So they said, 'Well, write it in the script: *black actor*.'" Stefano scribbled this in on the spot and the case was closed.

Stefano's first completed teleplay for the show "A Feasibility Study" was immediately hamstrung by the censors. In it, six square city blocks of Beverly Hills are abducted to Venus, where the

resident Earthlings are studied to see if they'd make a suitable slave labor force for the Venusians, who are crippled by an eruptive disease that literally turns them to stone. Rather than submit, the test group willfully infects itself with the Venusian malady, causing their captors to seek less headstrong slaves elsewhere in the galaxy. The original script showed children and animals as the first to succumb to the hostile alien environment; ABC not only rejected that notion outright, but saw the climactic self-sacrifice of the humans as an endorsement of mass suicide!

"We fought continually with the censors," says Stefano. "I used to put things into scripts *knowing* they would be taken out, just to save other things from cutting. Dorothy Brown [an ABC censor] wasn't easy to deal with at all; we'd get from her three- or four-page lists of things that had to go. The signals were all crossed. I'd get a call from the network heads saying, 'Let's have more monsters, we love this, do more



Courtesy Forrest J. Ackerman

Above: Original Wah Chang sketch for the Empyrian from "Second Chance."

Left: Simon Oakland in the finished makeup.

of that.' Generally it would be the very thing Dorothy *hadn't* wanted me to do."

"Some of the notes she wrote Joe were so ridiculous you just wouldn't believe it," says *Outer Limits* director Gerd Oswald. "She'd raise objections to anything that might be too gory or spooky. Brown's superior at ABC was a guy named Adrian Samish, who Stefano threw out of his office once. He was a total terror."

Byron Haskin, who directed "A Feasibility Study," adds that the censors and executives were "bloated with self-importance, had no talent, and threw down the most insane ukases of *do this, don't do that*. TV isn't even

the amusement business anymore, it's the world of advertising—and any relation to honest drama is purely coincidental."

"My ace in the hole," says Stefano, "was to refuse to do the show. Then all the phones would start ringing. My objective became not to get caught and crushed between the censors and the network heads. So I would argue with Dorothy up to a certain point and then say, 'Well, let's pull the show.' As soon as everybody heard that, they'd get time-conscious, and eventually the show would come back okay. They're weird. They're weird people."

The kids and pets were written out of "A Feasibility Study," leaving the six stolen blocks conspicuously adult. Nearby Venus became faraway "Luminos," and the physical decrepitation caused by the Luminoid germ—a kind of rotting black mossy growth—was made more visually palatable. Stefano's ending remained untouched, but the completed print of the show sat shelved for eight months due to the censorship controversy, which became

the kernel of a growing dissent between Stefano and ABC. The show was finally aired nearly a year after he turned in the finished script.

Following the broadcast of "Feasibility Study" was "The Production and Decay of Strange Particles," the fourth and final contribution to the series by Leslie Stevens as writer-director, and "The Chameleon," which helped close out *The Outer Limits*' first season. But one of the program's most outré gambits was the final episode of that first season, a work of "unscience fiction" called "The Forms of Things Unknown," to be written, produced, and directed by Stefano. When ABC turned thumbs-down on the entire script and balked at the idea of Stefano becoming another "triple threat" writer/director/producer like Stevens, Stevens responded by threatening to scuttle the whole series—and Stefano's magnum opus became still another battleground between the producers and the network.

NEXT: PROBING THE UNKNOWN
AND CHANGING THE GUARD

*During a story conference for *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, Samish reportedly told scenarist Harlan Ellison, "Writers are toadies. You'll do as you're told." According to Ellison, he got up to go for Samish when Samish recoiled, flopped backwards out of his chair, and had his pelvis broken by a huge model of the submarine *Seaview* that fell off the wall.



Luminoid extras from "A Feasibility Study" cavort behind the scenes.

THE OUTER LIMITS

Part Four

"There is nothing wrong with your television set. Do not attempt to adjust the picture. We are controlling transmission. We will control the horizontal. We will control the vertical. We can change the focus to a soft blur, or sharpen it to crystal clarity. For the next hour, sit quietly and we will control all that you see and hear. You are about to experience the awe and mystery which reaches from the inner mind to THE OUTER LIMITS."

by David J. Schow and Jeffrey Frentzen

CONTINUING OUR SEVEN-PART SURVEY OF THE SERIES, COMPLETE WITH THE WORDS OF THE CELEBRATED 'CONTROL VOICE.'

22. SPECIMEN: UNKNOWN

Broadcast February 24, 1964

Written by Stephen Lord; prologue by Leslie Stevens, additional material by Joseph Stefano
Directed by Gerd Oswald (prologue directed by Robert Justman)

Cast

Col. J.T. MacWilliams (Stephen McNally), Capt. Mike Doweling (Richard Jaeckel), Maj. Clark Benedict (Russell Johnson), Lt. Kenneth Galvin (Arthur Batanides), Lt. Gordon Halper (Peter Baldwin), Janet Doweling (Gail Kobe), Maj. Nathan Jennings (John Kellogg), Lt. Rupert Howard (Dabney Coleman), Sergeant (Walt Davis), Project Adonis Intercom Voice (Robert Johnson)

"For centuries, man has looked to the skies and sought to uncover the mysteries of the universe. The telescope brought into focus the craters on the moon and the canals on Mars, but it was limited, and man's insistent hunger for knowledge and experience would not be satisfied until he broke the massive chains of gravity and set foot himself on a planet other than his own. Project Mercury was his first venture into space; a testament to his technical ingenuity and courage, a green light to a hundred other projects which would take him still further. This is Project Adonis, a laboratory orbiting a thousand miles above the earth, a tiny, far-flung world connected only by radio and memory, and inhabited by a handful of men dedicated to removing the

unknown for future space travelers. At ten minutes after six on January eighth, Lieutenant Rupert Howard stumbled upon something clinging to the wall of the space-lock that appeared alive. He called them 'space barnacles,' for temporary identification. They were not ..."

When the mushroom-shaped spores Lt. Howard removes from the hull of the Adonis space station are incubated, they quickly mature into lilylike plants, emit a vapor poisonous to humans, then spray out new spores. Howard is killed by the gas in his lab, but investigation into his death is delayed by a shift change of station personnel. By the time anyone realizes that the plants are responsible, they are already aboard a shuttle headed for Earth with the newly relieved crew.

While Capt. Mike Doweling is outside the still-orbiting shuttle repairing the damaged servomechanism, the other three occupants succumb to the gas as the plants multiply and penetrate the shuttle bulkheads with their stems. A plan to destroy the shuttle while in orbit is scrubbed, and it crashes off course in a woodland area. By the time Project Adonis officials arrive at the scene, the plants have rooted by the thousands in Earth's soil. A rainstorm sweeps through the area, and grim fears about water nourishing the plants are allayed when it does quite the opposite—the plants emit an unearthly wail, die, and dissolve when exposed to water. Doweling and all but one of the shuttle party are rescued and revived.

"There are many things up there, evil and hungry, awesome and splendid. And gentle things, too. Merciful things like rain."

23. SECOND CHANCE

Broadcast March 2, 1964

Based on "Joy Ride," a script by Sonya Roberts redrafted by Lou Morheim. Teleplay credited to "Lin Dane" (Roberts) and Morheim, from a story by Lin Dane

Directed by Paul Stanley

Cast

Dr. ("Captain") Dave Crowell (Don Gordon), Mara Matthews (Janet DeGore), Empyrian (Simon Oakland), Arjay Beasley (John McLiam), Sueann Beasley (Angela Clark), Buddy Lyman



(Yale Summers), Donise Ward (Mimsy Farmer), Tommy "Neb" Shadbury (Arnold Merritt)

"When fear is too terrible, when reality is too agonizing, we seek escape in manufactured danger, in the thrills and pleasures of pretending, in the amusement parks of our unamusing world. Here, in frantic pretending, man finds escape and temporary peace, and goes home tired enough to sleep a short, deep sleep. But what happens here when night comes, when pretending ends ... and reality begins?"



Janet DeGore and Don Gordon.

Amusement park-goers given free passes to a spaceship ride suddenly find themselves aboard a real flying saucer, bound for a planet called Empyria and piloted by a pedantic alien given to lofty speechmaking. The Empyrian has abducted a "psycho-organized" group with "the least to lose" in order to colonize an Earthlike asteroid called Tythra, which is fated to collide with Empyria and set in motion a billiard-ball chain of events that will culminate in the destruction of Earth. Together, he reasons, his race and Earthlings suited to Tythra's environment—the abductees—can work to prevent the catastrophe. Most of the passengers, however, aren't too thrilled with the idea of abandoning their lives on Earth just to avoid a disaster that is eighty-two years in the future. Dave Crowell, an unemployed astrophysicist moonlighting as the space-ride's pilot, is intrigued by the proposition, causing the others to see him as their enemy.

"They try to murder him, but the Empyrian intercedes. Crowell points out that most people don't want a new life or a second chance to redress their past failings, and if the Empyrian was to state his problem openly to the people of Earth, he'd reap a whole shipload of volunteers. The Empyrian agrees, and reverses course.

"Doctor Crowell was right. They came. Not people in need of a second chance, but those who would give that chance to Earth, and to their children's children."

24. MOONSTONE

Broadcast March 9, 1964

Written by William Bast, from story ideas by Joseph Stefano and Lou Morheim

Directed by Robert Florey

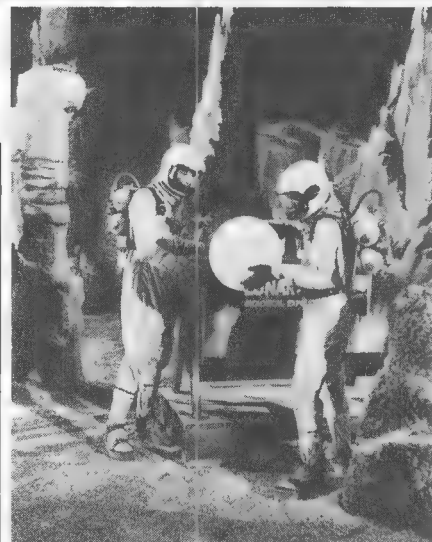
Cast

Prof. Diana Brice (Ruth Roman), Gen. Lee Stocker (Alex Nicol), Maj. Clint Anderson (Tim O'Connor), Dr. Phillip Mendl (Curt Conway), Lt. Ernie Travers (Hari Rhodes), Grippian Voice (Ben Wright), Scanner Unit Voice (Vic Perrin)

"In man's conquest of space, his own moon must be the first to surrender. From there, he will step his way across the heavens to the edge of infinity. Each step will be as uncertain as the last, yet each will bring him closer and closer to ultimate truth. Lunar Expedition One: Here a handful of brave scientists and technicians pave the way to the future. Their mission: To collect information that will eventually enable man to inhabit the moon; to use the moon as a springboard to the stars. Once during each twenty-four-hour period a force of three, commanded by General Lee Stocker and including Lieutenant Travers and Major Clint Anderson, makes its slow, uncharted way across the lunar surface, a surface whose depths and desires are as-yet unprobed ..."

During one of their daily lunar forays, Gen. Stocker and Maj. Anderson discover a radiant white sphere buried in a pit of moondust. The basketball-sized "moonstone" turns out to be a space

*When broadcast, "Second Chance" featured no closing narration by the Control Voice. The speech quoted here is from Robert's original teleplay.



Alex Nicol and Tim O'Connor.

vessel containing five fugitives from the planet Grippia. These monocular, anemonelike aliens are on the run from tyrants who have conquered their planet and would use the Grippians' collective genius to invent new weapons for the invasion and enslavement of still more worlds. When Stocker agrees to transmit a signal that will lead a rescue ship to the fugitives, the Grippians begin feeding their vast knowledge into the moonbase's computers, astounding the resident scientists with new facts and formulas. But the hoped-for rescue ship has already been obliterated by the tyrants, who follow the signal to the moon and arrive in a much larger sphere, demanding the return of the renegades. Stocker refuses, and the tyrants commence wiping out the moonbase. The fugitives opt to surrender, to prevent further devastation, but before the larger moonstone can absorb them, they blow themselves to cinders. The tyrants retreat empty-handed, and Stocker helplessly concedes that the fugitives chose correctly.

"The steps man takes across the heavens of his universe are as uncertain as those steps he takes across the rooms of his own life. And yet, if he walks with an open mind, those steps must lead him eventually to that most perfect of all destinations, truth."

25. THE MUTANT

Broadcast on March 16, 1964

Written by Allan Balter and Robert Mintz, from an original story by Joseph Stefano and Jerome Thomas, based on a treatment by Ellis St. Joseph. Developmental writing by St. Joseph, Victor Stoloff, and Betty Ulius

Directed by Alan Crosland, Jr.

Cast

Dr. Evan Marshall (Larry Pennell), Reese Fowler (Warren Oates), Julie Griffith (Betsy Jones-Moreland), Dr. Frederick Riner (Walter Burke), Prof. Henry LaCosta (Herman Rudin), Lt. Peter Chandler (Robert Sampson), Philip "Griff" Griffith (Richard Derr)

"At this very moment, our horizon is menaced by two explosive forces, both man-made. One is a deadly wonder; the other, wondrously alive. Both forces have compelled man to reach out for worlds beyond his own, new worlds, where he may find peace and room to grow. This is the first of those new worlds. The United Nations of Earth have claimed it, and called it Annex One. It is almost identical to Earth, except that there is no night. Sunlight is constant. Early reports from the small expeditionary team stationed on Annex One indicated that the ancient planet appeared to be suitable for colonization by Earth's overflowing population. But the most recent reports have contained unspoken, oddly disturbing undercurrents, and the United Space Agency has decided to investigate. The man chosen: Dr. Evan Marshall, psychiatrist."

Arriving on Annex One, investigating psychiatrist Marshall finds that Griffith, leader of the six-member pioneer team there, has died and there is no trace of his corpse. During introductions, botanist Reese Fowler refuses to shake Marshall's hand, and with good reason—the radio-isotope "rainstorms" on Annex One have caused Reese to mutate into a bug-eyed, bald semi-human who can go without sleep, read minds, and kill by touch. When Griffith had tried to abandon Reese on

Warren Oates as the "Fried Egg Monster."



Annex One for safety's sake, Fowler touched him, causing the atoms of his being to explode. Now Fowler has terrorized the colony into staying mum and remaining on Annex One to keep him company. When he reads the mind of colonist Chandler and finds an intention to slip Marshall a note revealing the truth about Annex One, Fowler kills him. While treating Fowler's condition, Dr. Riner discovers that darkness causes Fowler intense pain; since Annex One has no night, a nearby cave provides the colonists' only refuge from the mutant. When Prof. LaCosta is killed in the cave by a lethal alien insect, Julie Griffith's screams for help bring Marshall to the secret place. Riner then tries to secrete the truth about Annex One in Marshall's mind with a post-hypnotic suggestion, so that Fowler, thinking Marshall knows nothing, might allow him to return to Earth. The ruse fails; Riner is injured during one of Fowler's treatments and spills the plan before dying. Fowler chases Marshall and Julie Griffith to the cave and attempts to follow them inside, fixing on the single candle flame that is the sole light source within. He accidentally snuffs out the candle and howls with pain as the darkness kills him.

"The forces of violence and the forces of nature compel man to reach out toward the new horizons where peace and sanity may flourish, where there is room to grow. But before we run, should we not first make certain that we have done all that can be done here to end madness, quiet the disturbers of peace, and make room for those who need so little to grow in?"

26. THE GUESTS

Broadcast March 23, 1964
Written by Donald S. Sanford.
Originally titled "An Ordinary Town," from a story idea by Charles Beaumont

Directed by Paul Stanley

Cast

Wade Norton (Geoffrey Horne), Theresa "Tess" Ames (Luana Anders), Florida Patton (Gloria Grahame), Ethel Latimer (Nellie Burt), Randall Latimer (Vaughn Taylor), Dr. C. Ames (Burt Mustin), Voice of Brain Creature (Robert Johnson)

["The Guests" includes no Control Voice narration at all.]



Geoffrey Horne and Gloria Grahame.

After nearly running his jalopy over an ancient old man on a country backroad, drifter Wade Norton seeks help and comes upon a mansion occupied by a quartet of eccentrics: shady financier Randall Latimer; his nattering, shrewish wife Ethel; faded film queen Florida Patton; and Tess Ames, a girl pictured inside a locket belonging to the old man. Once inside the house, Wade finds that the doors and windows have been replaced by smooth walls; there is no exit. He is drawn upstairs by a pulsating alien brain in the attic that lays his mind bare and dissects his emotional reactions. The brain means to construct an equation, using human emotions such as fear, anger, and despair as factors, with the product equaling the ultimate destiny of the human race. While all the occupants but Tess seem content to remain prisoners of the brain, Wade discovers that each has a personal exit door. They stay because inside the house (and as long as the brain continues its endless calculations), they do not age. Tess, in love with Wade, struggles to convince him to leave the house before he is trapped there by his own vanity, as the others have been. She reveals that the old man in the road was her father, 120 years old. When Wade refuses to leave because of his feelings for her—"There's nothing out there for me, either," he says—she uses her own doorway to escape. In seconds she withers (somewhat inexplicably) to dust. Wade remains inside, where the brain informs him that this new, hitherto undetected emotion—the love between Wade and Tess—is the missing capacity that completes the equation and offers hope for mankind. It commands him to leave. As Wade walks out into the sunlight, the brain vaporizes, consuming the house and the selfish, loveless people still within.

27. FUN AND GAMES

Broadcast March 30, 1964

Written by Joseph Stefano, based on a Robert Specht teleplay titled "Natural Selection." Story credited to Specht; teleplay to Specht and Stefano

Directed by Gerd Oswald

Cast

Mike Benson (Nick Adams), Laura Hanley (Nancy Malone), Anderan Senator (Robert Johnson), Calco Galaxy Male Primitive (Bill Hart), Detective (Ray Kellogg), Poker Dealer (Red Morgan), "Sharpie" the Assassin (Harvey Gardner), Sharpie's Voice (Vic Perrin), Poker Players: Theodore Marcuse, Charles Horvath, Jack Perkins, Buzz Henry

"There was a moment in time when those who were brilliant and powerful were also playful, and when they took recess from their exhausting and magnificent strides toward glory they replenished their darker passions with fun and games. On the planet Earth, such pastimes have been civilized and drained of all but their last few drops of blood ..."

For pure sport, an alien Senator representing the citizenry of the planet Andera abducts ex-boxer and small-time hood Mike Benson and divorcée Laura Hanley, electroporting them to an arena planet where they are pitted in battle against alien primitives from the Calco Galaxy. The goal of the game is to survive; the stakes, survival for the homeland of each male-female team. One of the Calco creatures takes an early lead by murdering its own partner in order to double its food supply. Mike and Laura learn some brutal truths about themselves in the thick of combat, eventually learning to function

Stuntman Bill Hart with his "road warrior" boomerang.



together instead of quarreling. When their opponent pursues Mike onto a footbridge spanning a bubbling river of lava, Laura retrieves its weapon, a sawtooth-bladed boomerang, and kills the creature. Mike slips and plummets into the fiery lake seconds later, but as the Senator points out, "survivors need survive only a split moment to be considered survivors. Rule of the game." He returns Mike and Laura to Earth, intact and wiser, then sets about devising fresh diversions for his Anderan thrill-seekers.

"The struggle for survival goes on on all levels of existence. Surrounded by the vastness of the universe, man tries to illuminate its pathways and make a place for himself in it. One day he will journey afar into its great darkness. Let us hope he brings with him the human qualities of friendliness, compassion, and love. And let us hope even more that in his future contest for existence, such qualities as these will be of profound and everlasting importance."

28. THE SPECIAL ONE

Broadcast April 13, 1964

Written by Oliver Crawford; prologue by Joseph Stefano

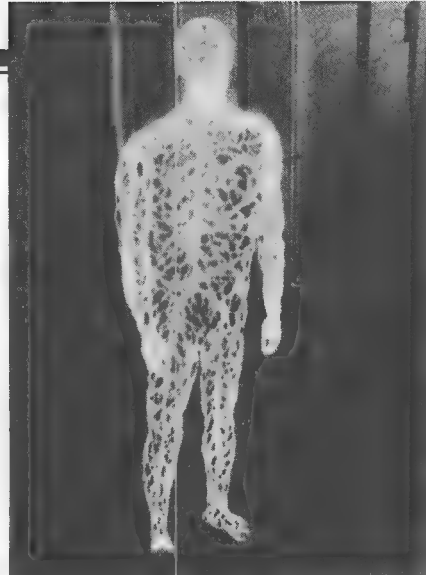
Directed by Gerd Oswald

Cast

Mr. Zeno (Richard Ney), Kenny Benjamin (Flip Mark), Roy Benjamin (MacDonald Carey), Agnes "Aggie" Benjamin (Marion Ross), Mr. Terrence (Edward C. Platt), Bill Turner (Jason Wingreen), Joe Haydn (Burt Freed)

"There is a belief that man's fullest potentials were sealed into him at the dawn of all life, and unfold themselves bit by bit, according to a carefully prepared timetable, to keep him in harmony with his surroundings. This can mean that we are all carrying within us now the seed of not only the man of tomorrow but the man beyond him. The nucleus of the atom, which has been dormant for millions of years, has been exploded to explode the future man, the superior man, from within our germ cells, so as to bypass the intervening generations. An explosion requires a catalyst, and such a catalyst can come from strange places, with

*As with "Second Chance," "Fun and Games" featured no closing narration. The speech quoted above is from Specht's original teleplay.



Mr. Zeno—a special effect shortly to become Richard Ney—materializes from the inside out.

dark and evil purpose ..."

Since young Kenny Benjamin is enrolled in a government-sponsored program to develop gifted children, it's a pleasant surprise when a private tutor named Mr. Zeno shows up to provide at-home instruction. But when Zeno clocks in after dark to school Kenny in such skills as controlling the climate, walking through solid walls, and cataloging elements that have not yet been discovered, Roy Benjamin, his dad, gets curious. When he sees Zeno dematerialize in the corridor outside their apartment, he becomes fairly sure that the rude, patrician tutor has nothing to do with the government. Zeno's mission is to indoctrinate intellectually precocious Earth children in the logistics of conquest, as a prologue to invasion by his homeworld, Xenon—gifted children supposedly being more mentally malleable than adults. When Roy's interference causes Zeno to hypnotize him into a suicide attempt, Kenny rigs the alien's climate-control device to bleed xenon gas out of the local atmosphere, nearly suffocating Zeno, who withdraws in defeat. Kenny reveals that he had been leading Zeno on by cooperating with his invasion efforts in order to learn how to use the machine to repel the Xenons. He plans to turn the machine over to the government, suggesting they "expand the principle so that it can repel a whole army at a time."

"The mold of a man stems from the mind of a child. Educators and emperors have known this from time immemorial. So have tyrants." 17

*As broadcast, "The Special One" included no introductory narration. The speech quoted above is from Crawford's original teleplay.



The Hitch-Hiker

by Rod Serling

THE ORIGINAL
TELEVISION SCRIPT
FIRST AIRED ON CBS-TV
JANUARY 22, 1960

Cast

Nan Adams Inger Stevens
Hitch-Hiker Leonard Strong
Sailor Adam Williams
Mechanic Lew Gallo
Highway Flag Man...Dwight Townsend
Counteraman Russ Bender
Waitress Mitzi McCall
Gas Station Man George Mitchell
Mrs. Whitney Eleanor Audley

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

1. EXT. SKY NIGHT

Shot of the sky ... the various

nebulae and planet bodies stand out in sharp, sparkling relief. As the CAMERA begins a SLOW PAN across the Heavens—

NARRATOR'S VOICE

There is a fifth dimension beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as vast as space, and as timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and shadow—between science and superstition. And it lies between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge. This is the dimension of imagination. It is an area which we call the Twilight Zone.

The CAMERA has begun to PAN DOWN until it passes the horizon and is flush on the OPENING SHOT (EACH WEEK THE OPENING SHOT OF THE PLAY).

2. EXT. ROAD DAY FULL SHOT

A BRAND-NEW SEDAN

Up on a jack, a mechanic putting on a spare. Behind it is a tow truck. An attractive woman in her early thirties stands a few feet away from the mechanic watching him. He finishes tightening the bolts, then turns to look up at her.

MECHANIC

How fast were you going, lady?

ADAMS

Sixty—sixty-five, something like that.

The mechanic looks over toward the road.

3. MED. LONG SHOT. SKID MARKS

That head diagonally off the road over toward the shoulders.

**4. TWO SHOT
MECHANIC AND GIRL**

MECHANIC

(pointing to the tire and then to the side of the road)

Blowout, shoulders like pudding.
And sixty-five miles an hour.
(he shakes his head and clucks)
Lady, you're on the side of the angels. By rights you shouldn't have called a mechanic. Somebody should have phoned for a hearse.

He takes the hubcap, fits it into place, then secures it with a rubber hammer. The CAMERA PANS to a point over his shoulder where we're looking down at the reflection of the girl in the hubcap.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

Her name is Nan Adams. She's thirty-one years old. Her occupation—buyer at a New York department store. At present on vacation, driving cross-country to Los Angeles, California, from Manhattan.

**5. LONG SHOT
THE MECHANIC**

As he carries his tools back toward the tow truck. He calls over his shoulder.

MECHANIC

Just follow me into town, Miss. I'll see if I can't fix you up with a good used tire.

The girl waves, turns to go back into her car.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

Minor incident just beyond the Pulaski Skyway that stretches over the Jersey Flats. Perhaps to be filed away under "accidents you walk away from", conversational item to be dredged up for the winter months when Miss Adams talks of her trip to friends.

(a pause)

But from this moment on Nan Adams's companion on a trip to California will be terror, her route—fear ... her destination ... quite unknown.

6. MED. CLOSE SHOT ADAMS

As she starts to start the car, pushes the starter button. The engine catches. She looks to her left to see if cars are coming.

**7. LONG SHOT ADAMS'S
P.O.V.**

Along the side of the road. A man stands there staring at her, perhaps fifty yards away. He's a thin, scrawny, nondescript-looking guy who stands there with his thumb-out, pointing west. There's nothing innately menacing about him. Rather, he's a drab, totally undistinctive, colorless person. But yet, there is something ...

8. MED. CLOSE SHOT ADAMS

As she turns away from him abruptly, guns the engine.

**9. MED. LONG SHOT
THE CAR**

As it pulls away, leaving the man behind it.

**10. LONG SHOT LOOKING
DOWN THE ROAD**

Over the man's shoulder, toward the disappearing car.

DISSOLVE TO:

OPENING BILLBOARD
FIRST COMMERCIAL

FADE IN:

11. INT. GARAGE OFFICE DAY

Through the large glass window of the door we can see a section of the garage. The girl's car is outside. She enters the room carrying her purse. The mechanic is just tabulating a bill. He finishes it, hands it to her.

MECHANIC

Five bucks for the call, three and a half for the tire. Tax, thirty-one cents. Whole thing comes to eight eighty-one.

ADAMS

Cheaper than a funeral, isn't it?

MECHANIC

You can say that again.

She takes out her purse, hands him a bill. While he walks over to the cash register she stands by the front window facing the street.

12. CLOSE SHOT GIRL

As she suddenly starts.

**13. CLOSE SHOT
THE FRONT GLASS**

We see the reflection of a man

standing there, the hitch-hiker as before. He slowly turns until he's looking directly toward the camera.

14. CLOSE SHOT GIRL

Again as she turns away compulsively. The mechanic has just rung up the sale and is handing her change.

MECHANIC

Here you are, Miss. Change from a ten. I checked your other tires for you. They look okay—

(he stops, staring at her)

Anything wrong?—

ADAMS

No. Nothing's wrong. I was just looking at that ... that hitch-hiker.

MECHANIC

(looking over her shoulder toward the front window)

What hitch-hiker?

ADAMS

(turns again to stare out the window)

He's gone now. Guess he got picked up.

MECHANIC

Probably.

ADAMS

I saw him a little while ago, though, while you were fixing the tire.

MECHANIC

(shrugs)

Probably got a lift right after we passed him.

ADAMS

Yeah.

(very thoughtfully)

Probably.

(and then, forcing a brightness into her voice)

I'd better get going or I'll never make Los Angeles. I've only got six days to do it.

MECHANIC

Shouldn't be hard. Brand-new buggy. Good weather. Ought to make it easy in six days.

Then he stops again, looking forward the girl whose back is to him again.

ADAMS

He didn't get a lift. I just saw him again.

The Hitch-Hiker

MECHANIC

Who?

ADAMS

(turns to him, forces a smile, trying to make it sound unimportant)

The hitch-hiker.

(she closes her handbag)

Thanks very much for all your help.

MECHANIC

That's okay, Miss. Have a nice safe trip.

ADAMS

Thank you.

She walks out of the door and goes out toward the garage. PAN SHOT over to mechanic, who sits down at the desk, picks up a magazine, then as kind of an afterthought, looks up to stare out toward the front window, makes a kind of face, shrugs.

MECHANIC

Hitch-hiker!

(shakes his head)

I don't see no hitch-hiker!

DISSOLVE TO:

15-19. DIFFERENT ANGLE SHOTS LOOKING DOWN ON HIGHWAYS

Every other one winding up on a shot of the hitch-hiker standing alongside of the road or under an overpass or a highway light. Interspersed with shots of Adams at the wheel reacting.

ADAMS'S VOICE

I saw him again twenty miles from the entrance to the Pennsylvania Turnpike. And then again on the Turnpike. Just standing there. Not menacing really. If anything, drab. A little mousy. Just a shabby, silly-looking scarecrow man. I shouldn't even think about him at all, but ... it's the coincidence of the thing, the fact that ... wherever I go—there he is. Wherever I stop I see him. No matter how far I travel or how fast I go—he's ahead of me. He's always ahead of me.

DISSOLVE TO:

20. EXT. ROADBLOCK DETOUR DAY

A highway worker with a flag

waves a car forward going east, holds up his hand at Adams's car, which stops.

21. LONG SHOT LOOKING FROM ADAMS'S CAR TOWARD THE MAN WITH THE FLAG

MAN

Just a minute, Miss. Construction ahead.

22. MED. CLOSE SHOT ADAMS

As she leans out of the window, looking.

ADAMS

All right.

Now she leans back in the seat, studies the road map that lies alongside for a moment, then looks through the front windshield. In the process her eyes scan the rearview mirror.

23. CLOSE SHOT MIRROR

We see the hitch-hiker ambling toward her, a slow, steady gait, the face noncommittal. No will, no resolve, and again—not menacing.

24. CLOSE SHOT ADAMS

She bites her lip, looks toward the man with the flag, then leans out the window, looking toward the road at the hitch-hiker as he approaches. The hitch-hiker holds up his hand in a gesture.

HITCH-HIKER

Heading west?

25. CLOSE SHOT ADAMS

In this given moment she is illogically, wildly frightened. She shakes her head in a spasmodic quick gesture. Her words tumble out.

ADAMS

No. No, I'm not going west. I'm sorry. I'm just going up the road a little ways. I'm really very sorry.

She presses the starter button. The engine turns over and over and over, but doesn't catch.

26. LONG ANGLE SHOT

Looking down at the approaching hitch-hiker.

27. CLOSE SHOT STARTER BUTTON

As she continues to push it.



**28. DIFFERENT ANGLE
BOTH THE CAR AND THE
HITCH-HIKER VISIBLE**

He's only a foot or two from the door. The engine starts and the car pulls away, leaving him standing there staring after it.

29. SHOT OF ADAMS'S CAR

As it shoots by the surprised highway worker. He starts to call to her and then gives up as the car speeds by.

**30. LONG SHOT
DOWN THE ROAD**

Looking toward the disappearing car.

DISSOLVE TO:

31. INT. DINER NIGHT

Adams sits in a booth over a cup of coffee and a half-finished meal, toying with a spoon. Her map lies on the table a few inches from her plate.

ADAMS'S VOICE

I'm on the Ohio Turnpike now. Thirty miles outside of Cleveland. I don't know why it is—but I'm frightened. A fear just about as vague as its object. Maybe it isn't really a fear. It's more just a sense of disquiet. A feeling that things are a little tilt ... a little wrong. It's vague because that's what that hitch-hiker is—he's vague. Like a charcoal sketch that somebody's half rubbed off, leaving just a kind of indistinct outline.

(a pause)

I wonder why it is he's always there. I wonder why I can't shake him.

(a pause and then with intensity)
I wonder why I can't stop
thinking about him!

A waitress comes up to the table, carrying a coffeepot.

WAITRESS

Want dessert, Miss?

ADAMS

(looks up)

I'm sorry, I—oh, no. No, thank you. More coffee, though.

The waitress pours more coffee into her cup, then looks at the map.

WAITRESS

You driving all alone?

ADAMS

All the way to California.

WAITRESS

That's a haul. Couldn't get me to drive that way all alone.

ADAMS

(a little tightly)

I'm enjoying it.

WAITRESS

(as she turns to go back to the kitchen, over her shoulder)

Well, as the man said as he kissed the cow, everyone to his own taste.

Then she cackles gleefully at the gag and the counterman surveys her wryly, grins across at Adams and points a thumb in the direction of the waitress who's disappearing into the kitchen.

COUNTERMAN

I keep telling her she ought to be on television.

Adams takes another sip of coffee, then rises and crosses over to the cash register at the end of the counter, puts down the check and a bill. The counterman crosses over to the cash register behind the counter, takes the bill, rings up the sale. Adams, with an obvious effort to remain disinterested, as if the following were small talk:

ADAMS

Get many hitch-hikers around here?

COUNTERMAN

Hitch-hikers? Here?

ADAMS

Rare, huh?

COUNTERMAN

Couldn't be no rarer. Guy'd be a fool hitching a ride on a turnpike. Look at it. It's two hundred and forty-three miles long from Petersburg to Columbia, with practically no speed limit, and it's a straightaway. Now what car's going to stop to pick up a guy under those conditions? Would you?

ADAMS

No. No, I probably wouldn't.

COUNTERMAN

Guy might get a lift before the

turnpike starts. Maybe by the toll house or something, but then it would be a mighty long ride. Most cars wouldn't want to pick up a guy for that long a ride, and you know—this is kind of lonely country out here. Flat land ... hills ... that sort of thing. You didn't see anyone hitching, did you?

ADAMS

(quickly)

Oh no. No, I haven't seen anyone like that. I was just wondering ... that's all.

She takes the change, puts it in her purse, smiles a hard, brittle, forced smile, turns, and starts toward the door.

32. TRACK SHOT WITH HER

As she walks across the room. She pauses by the door as if the prospect of getting back into the car is somehow more than she can take at the moment.

COUNTERMAN

(behind her)

Something wrong, Miss?

ADAMS

(again the forced smile)

Oh, I don't know. I was just ... I was just thinking ... I was just thinking how good it'll be to be able to stop driving. It's getting so ...

(and then with an intensity that surprises the counterman and herself)

I hate that car!

And then compulsively and with effort she goes out the door.

DISSOLVE TO:

**33. EXT. ROAD FULL SHOT
RAILROAD CROSSING DAY**

As a red light begins to flash on a barricade that slowly starts to come down.

**34. DIFFERENT ANGLE
ADAMS'S CAR**

As it pulls to a stop in front of the barricade.

35. MED. CLOSE SHOT ADAMS

In the front seat, waiting. She looks off in the direction of the oncoming train. The sound of it is a distant wail way off in the distance.

The Hitch-Hiker

36. CLOSE SHOT RED LIGHT
Swinging back and forth.

37. CLOSE SHOT ADAMS WAITING
Her face suddenly freezes as she stares directly through the front windshield at something ahead of her.

38. LONG SHOT THROUGH WINDSHIELD
Across the tracks. There stands the hitch-hiker staring down at the ground. The sound of the train grows louder as it approaches.

39. CLOSE SHOT ADAMS
Frightened. She slams her foot on the accelerator and the car immediately jerks forward and stalls.

40. FULL SHOT THE TRACKS
Taking in the hitch-hiker and the car, as once again it starts, jerks forward onto the tracks, and then stalls again.

41. CLOSE SHOT ADAMS AT THE WHEEL
As once again she tries to start it furiously.

42. MED. LONG SHOT HITCH-HIKER
As he looks up to stare at her, just a touch of a smile on his plain, undemonstrative face.

43. MED. CLOSE SHOT ADAMS
As she whirls around to stare through the side window at the track.

44. CLIP ONCOMING TRAIN HEADLIGHTS
As it barrels toward the camera.

45. CLOSE SHOT ADAMS
As she struggles to start the car, half sobbing now, close to hysteria.

46. CLOSE SHOT HITCH-HIKER
Smiling.

47. CLIP TRAIN
Closer.

48. CLOSE SHOT ADAMS
As she finally gets the car started, throws it into reverse.

49. MED. LONG SHOT CAR
As it barrels backward to the other side of the track where she began.

50. CLIP TRAIN GOING BY
In front of the camera.

51. MED. CLOSE SHOT THROUGH WINDSHIELD LOOKING AT ADAMS
The lights playing on her face as the train passes. Then they stop. The sound of the train disappears into the distance. She looks up and opens her eyes again. There's dead silence.

52. LONG SHOT THROUGH WINDSHIELD OF OTHER SIDE OF TRACK
The hitch-hiker no longer is there. SLOW PAN SHOT BACK toward her car as we hear her voice again.

ADAMS'S VOICE
Now the fear is no longer vague. The terror isn't formless. It has a form. He was beckoning me, that drab, skinny man in the cheap shabby suit. He was beckoning me. He wanted me to start across. He wanted me to die. I know that now.

Now the camera is shooting on her through the side window of the car.

ADAMS'S VOICE
I don't know what to do now. I don't know if I should turn around and go back to New York ... or go on ahead. Stabbing little thoughts gouge at my brain. Ugly, frightened thoughts. Projections of tomorrow and the next day. Driving through desert. Driving through the plains. Unspeakably, nightmarishly alone. And I know I'll see him. I'll see him at detours. At railroad crossings. He'll be looking at me at stop lights. If I stay at a motel ... I'll be able to open a door and see him on a highway. I don't know what to do now. I don't know what to do.

(she buries her face against the wheel)

I just don't know what to do.

FADE TO BLACK.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE ON.

53-58. EXT. HIGHWAY VARIOUS SHOTS DIFFERENT ANGLES ADAMS'S CAR
As it moves along. Intersperse DAY and NIGHT.

ADAMS'S VOICE
Three days and three nights now of driving. Past Indiana into Illinois, through the Ozark country of Missouri and on into Kansas. Three days and three nights. Stop for food and then drive. Stop for food ... and the routine goes on. Towns go by without names. Landscapes without form. The hands on the car clock move and I don't even see them. Now it isn't even a trip—it's flight. Route 66 isn't a highway anymore—it's an escape route. So I keep going. Conscious of only one thing—I've got to get where I'm going and I can't let that hitch-hiker close in on me!

DISSOLVE TO.

59. EXT. HIGHWAY NIGHT LONG ANGLE SHOT LOOKING DOWN TOWARD ADAMS'S APPROACHING CAR

ADAMS'S VOICE
Just fifteen miles above the border of Oklahoma and Texas. Ten o'clock at night ... the fourth day.

60. MED. CLOSE SHOT THE CAR
As it seems to sputter to a stop and pulls over to the side of the road. CAMERA ZOOMS IN ON TIGHT CLOSE SHOT OF ADAMS through the window.

ADAMS'S VOICE
The engine stopped and I sit there in the front seat refrigerated by fear ... out of gas!

61. MED. LONG SHOT ADAMS
After a moment she gets out of the car, leaving the lights on.

62. TRACK SHOT WITH HER
As she half runs, half stumbles a few yards ahead of the car and

then stops, staring at a sign that is caught in the headlights of the car. It says, "Gas—Eats, just ahead." She lets out a kind of sob that is part a massive relief and part a clutching, almost hysterical fear. She starts to run again.

**63-65. DIFFERENT ANGLES
ADAMS RUNNING**

DISSOLVE TO:

**66. EXT. GAS STATION
NIGHT ANGLE SHOT
LOOKING THROUGH TWO
GAS PUMPS**

To the approaching figure of Adams. The CAMERA STAYS with her as she approaches, runs to the front door, and almost throws herself against it. It's locked. She jerks on the doorknob again, then pounds with her fist.

ADAMS
Please . . . please, someone . . . help me!

A light goes on in the back of the gas station and there's the sound of footsteps from inside.

**67. MED. CLOSE SHOT
THE DOOR**

Framed in the camera as the footsteps grow louder and the door is flung open. Through the screen we see a man in an undershirt and an obviously hurriedly thrown-on pair of pants.

MAN
(yawning)
Yeah? What is it? What do you want?

ADAMS
I'm out of gas. I'm just a quarter of a mile or so down the road.

MAN
Come back in the morning. I'll fix you up.

ADAMS
(the hysteria creeping into her voice again)
Please, I just can't stay here all night. I've got to get some gas.

MAN
Must be past midnight—

ADAMS
It's only eleven o'clock.

MAN
Well, we close up here at nine.



I'm sorry, lady. Try up the road. Honeysuckle Lodge. They got a gas pump there. It's only a mile or so up.

He starts to close the door again.

ADAMS
(her voice loud, almost a cry)
Please. I can't walk any farther. Please.

MAN
Lady, I'd like to help you, but I've been up since five this mornin' and I'm just dead. Like I told you, it's only a mile or so to the Honeysuckle Lodge—

ADAMS
But I've got to have a can of gas. I just can't stay there by myself. There's a man . . . there's a very suspicious-looking man.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(from inside)
Hen-ry? Who is it, Hen-ry?

MAN
It's nobody, Mother. Just a gal who wants some gas. Go back to bed.

(he turns back toward Adams)
What about this man? What was he doin'?

ADAMS
Nothing . . . but he just stands there. I keep seeing him all the time. He just stands there.

MAN
(shakes his head)
Then what of it? That's nothin' to wake a man in the middle of his sleep about!

(sternly)
Now listen, young woman. You must have taken a nip or something. If you haven't got anything better to do than to wake decent folks out of their hard-earned sleep—

ADAMS
But . . . he looked . . . he looked as if he were going to rob me.

MAN
(as he closes the door)
Well, if he does—you come back and I'll call the sheriff for you.

Now the door is shut tight. Adams pounds on it again and listens to

The Hitch-Hiker

the footsteps as they disappear, and after a moment the light inside the house goes out.

68. MED. CLOSE SHOT

As she whirls around, her back against the screen door, staring from left to right. And then suddenly she stops breathing as off in the darkness surrounding the station there's the sound of footsteps crunching on gravel, getting louder as they approach and get closer. She stifles a sob and tries to back closer against the wall, just standing there.

69. LONG SHOT THROUGH THE GAS PUMPS

Looking toward the highway as a figure looms up indistinct in the darkness.

70. CLOSE SHOT ADAMS

Her mouth is open, ready to scream.

71. LONG SHOT LOOKING TOWARD THE FIGURE AGAIN ADAMS'S P.O.V.

The figure takes on form now and we see it's a sailor carrying a small overnight bag. He stops a few yards from her and peers ahead, surprised by what he's looking at, almost unbelieving.

SAILOR
Lady?

ADAMS
(exhaling in massive relief)
Yes, yes, that's exactly what I am. I'm a lady.
(then she laughs, a shrill, barely controlled laugh)
That's exactly what I am—a lady.

SAILOR
What are you doin' out so late? You work here? This your place?

ADAMS
No ...
(now the words tumble out)
My car's just up the road. I ran out of gas. The man here won't give me any.

SAILOR
I saw your car. You left your keys in it.

ADAMS
Do you live around here?

SAILOR
Nope. I'm coming back from leave.

ADAMS
Where you headed?

SAILOR
Goin' back to my ship. She's in

San Diego. That's where I'm heading. San Diego.

ADAMS
You want a ride?

SAILOR
You kidding?

ADAMS
No, I mean it. I'll take you all the way to San Diego. Will you drive with me?

SAILOR
(grins and approaches her)
Don't ask twice, lady. You've got yourself a rider!

ADAMS
But I don't have any gas, though.

SAILOR
We'll fix that up. Did you try to get the people here?

ADAMS
The man's in bed.

SAILOR
Well, let's get him out of bed. All we need's a couple of gallons. I seen a couple of all-night gas station signs all along the road. There must be plenty up ahead.

He walks toward Adams, pounds on the door.

SAILOR
Let's go, Pop! You got some customers out here!

He continues to pound and over his shoulder we see Adams standing there, relieved to the point of sheer and utter delight: a woman who has found a protector and revels in it.

DISSOLVE TO:

72. MED. LONG SHOT THE TWO OF THEM

As they walk toward the car, carrying a can of gas.

DISSOLVE TO:

73. SHOT OF THE CAR

Pulling away with both of them inside.

DISSOLVE TO:

74. CAR MOVING DOWN A HIGHWAY



CUT TO:

75. PROCESS SHOT THE TWO OF THEM INSIDE THE CAR

SAILOR

You mind if I take off my shoes?
My feet feel like two hot bricks.

ADAMS

You go right ahead.

SAILOR

You know, I keep thinking I'll wake up or something. Middle of the night. No cars. No nothin'—who do I meet? A lady who looks like a movie star. A brand-new car. And a hitch all the way to the Coast. When I tell the guys back on the ship—you know what the odds are for even one guy believing me?

ADAMS

(laughs, again a high shrill laugh)
I'll write up an affidavit for you
and we'll get a notary to sign it.

The sailor joins in the laughter.



**76. DIFFERENT ANGLE
PROCESS TWO OF THEM IN
THE CAR**

ADAMS

You hitch-hike much?

SAILOR

Back and forth on leave. It's tough sometimes in this open country. Trucks aren't so bad. They'll pick you up. But you have trouble with cars. People in cars don't like to pick up hitch-hikers at night.

ADAMS

I suppose not. But ... I'll bet ... I'll bet if you got a good pick-up in a fast car you could go places faster than ... say ... another person in another car.

SAILOR

(turns to her, puzzled)
I suppose.

ADAMS

(her whole voice and manner compulsive now)

Well, take me, for instance. Suppose I'm driving across the country, say, at a nice steady clip of about forty-five miles an hour. Well, could a guy like you, just standing beside the

road, waiting for lifts, beat me to town after town—provided you got picked up every time in a car going sixty-five to seventy miles an hour?

SAILOR

(shrugs)

I suppose. Maybe he could and maybe he couldn't. What difference does it make?

ADAMS

Oh—no difference. It's just that ... kind of a crazy idea I've had sitting here in the car.

SAILOR

(laughs)

I suppose that's one way of spending your time!

Suddenly Adams yanks the wheel to the left. The car shrieks as it turns suddenly. The sailor grabs her arm.

SAILOR

What's goin' on? What's the matter?

ADAMS

Did you see him? Did you see that man?

SAILOR

Who?

ADAMS

The man ... standing beside the barbed-wire fence.

SAILOR

I didn't see anybody. That wasn't nothing but a bunch of steers. What do you think you're doing? Trying to run into a fence?

ADAMS

There was a man there. A kind of a thin, grey man with an overnight bag in his hand.

SAILOR

You must be over-tired or something, lady. There was nothin' there but some cows and a fence.

ADAMS

I saw him.

CUT TO:

**77. DIFFERENT ANGLE
LOOKING OVER THEIR
SHOULDER**

We see the white ribbon of road up ahead under their headlights. Then the CAMERA PANS UP and we see a long, long shot of the hitch-hiker standing there. Again Adams swerves the wheel and



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heads toward him. This time the sailor screams, grabs the wheel just a few moments before they seem to be running headlong into the hitch-hiker, pulling the car straight again and continuing past. Now the sailor bends over, flicks off the key. The car sputters and the sailor pulls the wheel over to the right.

78. EXT. HIGHWAY

As the car pulls over to the shoulder of the road.

**79. MED. LONG SHOT
THROUGH THE WINDOW OF
THE TWO OF THEM**

SAILOR

Lady, maybe you better let me drive.

ADAMS

You must have seen him that time.

SAILOR

(looks at her intensely)

I didn't see anybody. What were you tryin' to do?

ADAMS

I was trying to hit him.

SAILOR

What?

ADAMS

That's right, I was trying to hit him. Maybe if I could kill him I could make him stop—

The sailor now inches away from her, staring at her, very, very concerned. With one free hand he slowly moves for the door and opens it.

ADAMS

(frightened)

What are you doing? Where are you going?

SAILOR

No place in particular, lady. Just out of sight. Any place that puts distance between me and this automobile.

ADAMS

Please. Please don't get out. I'll drive more carefully now. I promise.

SAILOR

No, baby. I'd kind of like to get back to my ship in one piece. And drivin' with you—

(he shakes his head)

That's a lousy guarantee I'll ever make it!

ADAMS

Please. Please, I'm sorry. I don't know what came over me—please ... please don't go.

SAILOR

(half out the door)

I'm sorry, lady. You'll have to excuse me—

ADAMS

You can't go! You understand—you can't go! Look ... look, I'll take you right into San Diego. I'll take you right to the docks. I promise.

SAILOR

(nods)

Sure, seeing elephants, skyscrapers, and make-believe people all the way. Thanks, but no thanks.

ADAMS

(desperately)

Look, I like you. Really, I like you very much. That's the reason I picked you up. We could ... we could be friends. I'd like you to take me out. Really. Please ...

SAILOR

(gets out of the car now, slams the door)

I'm sorry, lady.

ADAMS

(moving over to his side of the car, talking out of his window)

Please. I know you think I'm out of my mind or something, but this man ... I've been seeing this man all the way across the country. He's been following me. If you could only help me—stay with me—just until I reach the Coast—

SAILOR

Honey, what you need is a good night's sleep. You don't need a boyfriend, just a good night's sleep.

(he tosses a salute, backs away from the car)

I'll see you around!

Then he walks off into the darkness.

ADAMS

(screams after him)

Please! Please!

She turns back to face the wheel, starts the car and then pulls away.

DISSOLVE TO:

**80-86. DIFFERENT SHOTS
THE CAR AGAIN
NIGHT AND DAY**

Interperse with shots of the hitchhiker.

ADAMS'S VOICE

And then I began to see him again. In the middle of the Texas prairies . . . and then everywhere. Whenever I stop, even for a moment—for gas, for oil, for a drink of pop, for a cup of coffee, a sandwich—he's there. He's outside of an auto camp in Amarillo. He's sitting near a drinking fountain and little camping spot on the border of New Mexico. He's waiting for me outside of a Navajo Reservation when I stopped to check my tires. I see him again in Albuquerque where I buy twelve gallons of gas. He's everywhere I go. Always ahead of me. Always looking at me . . . always waiting for me!

**87. EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE
SHOT THE CAR NIGHT**

As it comes toward the camera, stops abruptly. **PULL BACK** for exterior diner, night.

88. MED. CLOSE SHOT ADAMS

As she sits in the car for a moment. Her voice follows her getting out of the car and walking toward the diner.

ADAMS'S VOICE

Now I'm outside of a diner near Gallup, New Mexico. There's a pay phone outside and I'm going to call home. Back to New York. Put in a call to my mother so I can speak to someone familiar. Someone I love. Someone to bring back reality to me . . . just a voice. A warm, familiar voice so I won't lose my mind—

**89. MED. CLOSE SHOT
OUTSIDE PHONE BOOTH**

As Adams goes into it, shuts the door, puts in a coin.



90. INT. PHONE BOOTH

OPERATOR'S VOICE
Number, please.

ADAMS
Long distance.

OPERATOR'S VOICE
This is long distance.

ADAMS
I'd like to put a call in to my home in New York City. I'm Nan Adams. The number is Trafalgar two, oh-eight-two-eight.

OPERATOR'S VOICE
Thank you. What number are you calling from?

ADAMS
(looking at the phone)
Three-three-one-two.

OPERATOR'S VOICE
Albuquerque. New York for Gallup.

A pause.

NEW YORK OPERATOR
New York.

OPERATOR'S VOICE
Gallup, New Mexico, calling Trafalgar two, oh-eight-two-eight. Will you please deposit three dollars and eighty-five cents for the first three minutes?

Adams starts to feed coins into the phone. There's a small ring after each deposit.

OPERATOR'S VOICE

Ready with New York. Go ahead, please.

ADAMS
Hello.

WOMAN'S VOICE
Mrs. Adams's residence.

ADAMS
Hello, Hello—Mother?

WOMAN'S VOICE
(very flat and proper)
This is Mrs. Adams's residence. Who did you wish to speak to, please?

ADAMS
Who's this?

WOMAN'S VOICE
This is Mrs. Whitney.

ADAMS
Mrs. Whitney? I don't know any Mrs. Whitney. Is this Trafalgar two, oh-eight-two-eight?

WOMAN'S VOICE
Yes.

ADAMS
Where's my mother? Where's Mrs. Adams?

WOMAN'S VOICE
Mrs. Adams is not at home. She's still in the hospital.

ADAMS
The hospital?

WOMAN'S VOICE
Yes. Who's this calling, please? Is this a member of the family?

The Hitch-Hiker

ADAMS

What's she in the hospital for?

WOMAN'S VOICE

She's been prostrated for five days. Nervous breakdown. But who is this calling?

ADAMS

Nervous breakdown? But ... but there's nothing wrong with my mother. She's never been nervous.

WOMAN'S VOICE

It's all taken place since the death of her daughter.

ADAMS

The death of her daughter ... what are you talking about? What do you mean the death of her daughter? Who is this? What number is this?

WOMAN'S VOICE

This is Trafalgar two, oh-eight-two-eight. It's all been very sudden.

(a pause)

Nan was killed just six days ago in an automobile accident in New Jersey.

OPERATOR'S VOICE

Your three minutes are up, ma'am.

(a pause)

Ma'am, your three minutes are up. Your three minutes are up, ma'am. Your three minutes are up.

91. DIFFERENT ANGLE LOOKING THROUGH GLASS AT PHONE BOOTH

As Adams slowly, as if in a dream, replaces the receiver, turns slowly, opens the door, walks out. The light goes out in the booth behind her. She stands there quietly for a moment.

ADAMS

Very odd. But the fear has left me. I'm numb now. I have no feeling. It's as if someone had pulled out some kind of plug in me and everything—emotion, feeling, fear—it drained out. And now I'm kind of a cold shell.

(she looks up toward the desert sky)

I'm conscious of things around me now. The vast, soulless night of New Mexico. The frantically

blinking stars that look down from the darkness. Ahead of me stretch a thousand miles of empty mesa, mountains, prairies, desert. Somewhere among them, he's waiting for me. Somewhere I'll find out who he is. I'll find out ... I'll find out what he wants. Though just now ... for the first time, looking out at the night ... I think I know!

92. TRACK SHOT WITH HER

As she walks over to the car, opens the door, slides into the front seat.

93. DIFFERENT ANGLE

As she sits there motionlessly for a moment.

CUT TO:

94. INT. CAR FROM BEHIND HER SHOULDER

Taking in the back of her head as her eyes slowly look up to gaze into the rearview mirror.

95. EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT REARVIEW MIRROR

The hitch-hiker sits serenely in the back seat, his hands folded on his lap. He smiles ever so slightly. It could almost be described as a gentle smile.

HITCH-HIKER

I believe you're going my way!

CUT TO:

96. ABRUPT SHOT LOOKING DOWN AT THE CAR

As it pulls away and heads into the dark desert beyond. Over this shot we hear the narrator's voice.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

Nan Adams, age thirty-one. She was driving to California. To Los Angeles.

(a long pause)

She didn't make it. There was a detour ... through The Twilight Zone.

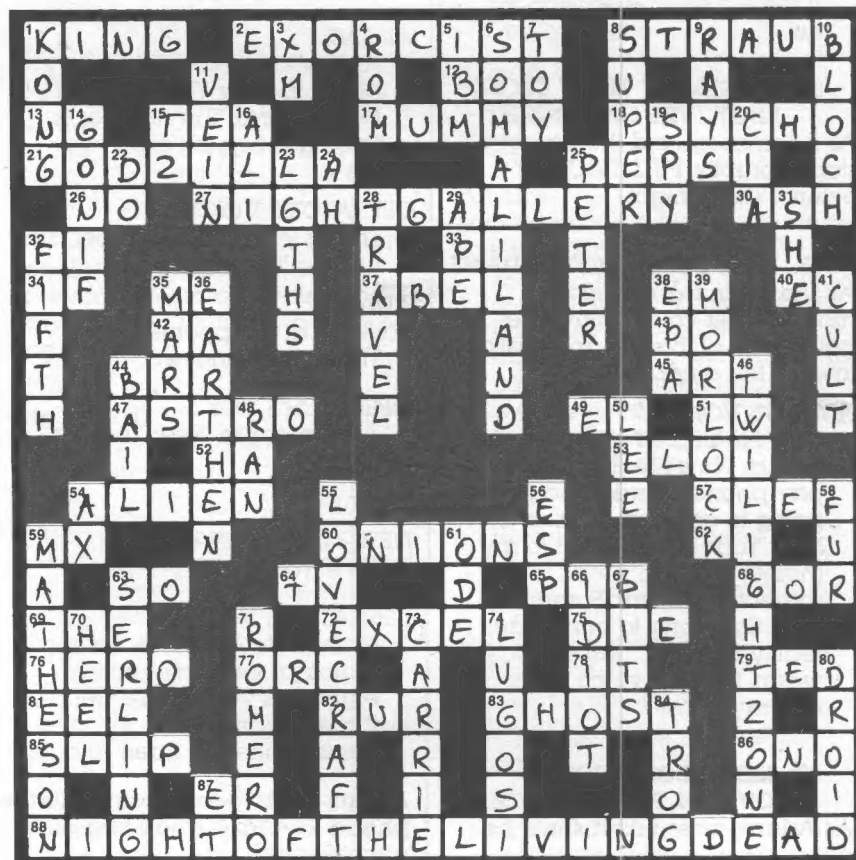
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THE END

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(from page 19)

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